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WITH POET AND PLAYER

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS

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Essays on Literature and the Stage

BY

WILLIAM DAVENPORT ADAMS

AUTHOR OF 'A BOOK OF BURLESQUE,' 'RAMBLES IN BOOK-LAND,' 'DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,' ETC.

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To

MY MOTHER

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

WITH LOVE

IN the following pages I deal lightly and slightly with some subjects, literary and theatrical, which have attracted me from time to time, in the intervals between severer labours. No effort has been made to exhaust any of the topics chosen. The desire has been rather to gossip than to descant, to suggest than to expound, to remind than to inform. No elaborate dish is offered, but only a variety of hors d'œuvres, prepared for the acceptance (it is hoped) of those who, for the moment, may have no appetite for more solid fare.

DAVENPORT ADAMS JUN^R.

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WITH POET AND PLAYER.

THE POET'S PIPE.

THERE was lately much talking and much writing about women and tobacco, as if the conjunction had never been known before. It can, of course, lay claim to no novelty. Did not Edmund Howes, writing in the first half of the seventeenth century, say of 'the weed' that it was then 'commonly used by most men, and many women'? Were not the daughters of Louis XIV. partial to it? Did not Tom Brown, in or about 1700, address an ancient dame 'that smoked tobacco' in these encouraging terms: 'Though the

ill-natured world censures you for smok
yet would I advise you, madam, not to
with so innocent a diversion'? It is
sible even to find a parallel for the r
grotesque enthusiasm displayed by the la
of to-day—in the case of that Amer
young person who 'desired to have tob
planted over her grave, that the weed n
ished by her dust might be chewed by
bereaved lovers.'

There is every likelihood that smoking
been indulged in by a few Englishwo
ever since tobacco was discovered and
ported. It cannot be said, however, that
feminine predilection for tobacco has b
celebrated, or even approved, by Eng
writers. When women and smoking h
been mentioned together, it has usually b
in order to emphasize their natural an
onism. Cowper calls tobacco a 'pernici
weed'—apparently because 'its scent
fair annoys,' and because its worst effect is
it 'banishes for hours the sex whose prese
civilizes ours.' When the poets have sun

the pipe, it has been as of a minister to their own delights. No lady rhymer that I wot of has ever had the courage to claim the pipe for her sisters; and it has not occurred to any male bard to suggest its appropriateness for women.

One of the earliest to commend it was Isaac Hawkins Browne, the last-century parodist, for whom it was a

> 'Little tube of mighty power,
> Charmer of an idle hour.'

Dr. Garth, of 'The Dispensary,' hailed it as emphatically a social pipe—

> 'Thou foe to care,
> Companion of my elbow chair'—

declaring that, as forth its curling fumes arose, they seemed an evening sacrifice. In a dialogue between a pipe and a snuffbox, Cowper made the former say:

> 'Do you see what a pretty contemplative air
> I give to the company—pray do but note 'em—
> You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
> Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.'

In these latter days, Charles Baudelaire and Pigault Lebrun, on the other side of the Channel, have sung the praise of the pipe in graceful verse; here, in Britain, one of Cope's laureates has eulogized 'the stately pipes of England,' describing 'how beautiful they be, with amber tips and meerschaum bowls,' and not disdaining even the cottage pipes, 'by thousands made of clay;' while, on the other side of the Atlantic, no less a personage than Mr. Lowell has thanked a friend for the present of a meerschaum, in lines which charm the student not less than the smoker:

'Mixture divine of foam and clay,
From both it stole the best away;
Its foam is such as crowns the glow
Of beakers brimmed by Veuve Clicquot;
Its clay is but congested lymph
Jove chose to make some choicer nymph . . .
Shaped to immortal form, the type
And very Venus of a pipe.'

The weed itself has had multitudinous praisers among the bards—from Spenser, who apostrophized it as 'Divine tobacco!' to Mr. Ashby Sterry, who has made such pretty

fancies out of 'cigarette rings.' 'There's a world of romance that persistently clings,' says that *debonnair* verse-man, 'To the azurine carving of cigarette rings.' Shakespeare, Milton, Victor Hugo—none of those masters wrote of tobacco, and yet we know that the two latter enjoyed its spirit and fragrance. So did Coleridge, who has a reference somewhere to 'smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bole.' The Laureate is a confirmed consumer of the weed, and yet he, also, has been silent on the subject. Have not smokers some right to complain? They can console themselves, however, with Ben Jonson's tributes, one of them put in the mouth of his Captain Bobadil, the other occurring in his 'Alchemist.' Sam Rowlands, too, spoke strongly for tobacco in his 'Knave of Clubbes'; and who does not remember the well-known song in 'Technogamia, or the Marriage of Arts,' celebrating the plant as a musician, a lawyer, a physician, a traveller, and what not; and concluding with the incontrovertible assertion that

'Earth ne'er did breed
Such a jovial weed
Whereof to boast so loudly'?

Less familiar is the ditty called the 'Triumph of Tobacco over Sack and Ale,' which first saw the light in 'Wits' Recreations,' in 1642. Therein it is roundly declared of tobacco that

'It helpeth digestion,
Of that there's no question;
The gout and the toothache it eases;
Be it early or late,
'Tis ne'er out of date,
He may safely take it that pleases.'

Another enthusiast for the weed was the aforesaid Hawkins Browne, who addressed it as 'Blest leaf!' and asseverated that its aromatic gales dispensed modesty to templars and sense to parsons. Writing in the last century, he describes tobacco as 'by ladies hated, hated by the beau.' On the other hand:

'By thee protected, and thy sister beer,
Poets rejoice, nor think the bailiff near.'

On the later celebrations by the bards there

is no need to dwell. Who has not read or heard of Byron's rapturous tribute in 'The Island' ('Divine in hookahs, glorious in a pipe'), of Lamb's 'Farewell to Tobacco' ('Plant divine, of rarest virtue'), of Hood's lines 'To a Cigar,' of H. S. Leigh's 'After-Dinner Cloud' and his 'Three Loves' ('My pipe, cigar, or cigarette'), of Calverley's 'Ode to Tobacco,' and, more lately, of the 'ballade' by Mr. Brander Matthews, in which that Transatlantic rhymer tells us that 'A slave is each man to the weed'?

The poet's song, however, has not always been in this same laudatory key. In the early stages of its career in England, tobacco had its enemies as well as its eulogists. Taylor, the water-poet, abused it roundly; and Joshua Sylvester wrote a poem called 'Tobacco battered, and the Pipes shattered (about their Ears that idely Idolize so base and barbarous a Weed).' In a book printed in 1599, a rhymer tells us how, at the theatre, he chanced to spy a 'Lock-Tobacco-Chevalier'

> 'Clowding the loathing ayr with foggie fume
> Of Dock Tobacco, friendly foe to rhume.'

He adds:

'I wisht the Roman Lawes severity—
Who smoke selleth, with smoke be don to dye.'

A quarter of a century later the ghost of Skelton (Henry VIII.'s Poet Laureate) was supposed to describe a journey from Westminster Hall to the Church of St. Paul, and so through the city—

'Where I saw and did pitty
My countrymen's cases,
With fiery-smoke faces,
Sucking and drinking
A filthie weede stinking,'

and so on. In a much milder strain of satire was Richard Heath's epigram, published early in the seventeenth century:

'We buy the driest wood that we can finde,
And willingly would leave the smoke behinde;
But in tobacco a thwart course we take,
Buying the heart only for the smoke's sake."

It may at least be claimed for the weed that it has supplied the peg on which to hang more than one poetic moral. Sir Robert Ayton wrote a sonnet in which he related how, forsaken of all comfort but these two,

his faggot and his pipe, he sat and mused at all his crosses. Hope stepped in :

'But having spent my pipe, I then perceive
That hopes and dreams are cousins—both deceive.'

It is equally futile, he concludes,

'To live upon Tobacco and on Hope,
For one's but smoke, the other is but wind.'

Better known are the salient passages in 'The Soule's Solace' (1631), with the refrain, 'Thus think, then drink tobacco,' to which the Rev. Ralph Erskine appended a continuation called 'Smoking Spiritualized.' Of recent years the chief moralist on this theme has been the late James Thomson (of 'City of Dreadful Night' celebrity), who thus discoursed upon a broken pipe :

'Neglected now it lies a cold clay form,
So late with living inspirations warm :
Type of all other creatures formed in clay—
What more than it for epitaph have they?'

STAGE FURNITURE.

A LIVING humourist has supplied a very amusing description of some of the habits and customs of the inhabitants of stageland. It is to be hoped that he will carry still further his investigations into the characteristics of that very singular country. There is a mine of wealth in the subject. The scenic peculiarities of that unique territory would, in themselves, call for much attention. Nowhere, certainly, but in stageland are the atmospheric effects so remarkable—the sun and the moon so very bright, so very rapid in their movements, so very varied in their gyrations; nowhere else do morning and evening come on quite so rapidly; nowhere else are the thunder and lightning, the rain and snow, so eccentric in their manifesta-

tions. Only in stageland are the rooms of the rich and the poor of precisely the same proportions; only in this canvas realm are doors so prolific, and articles of furniture so happily constituted that they move off, apparently, of their own accord.

One can fancy that ingenuous Mary Ann, sitting at the play, and especially while gazing at the melodrama of the period, must wish in her heart that her master's and mistress's goods and chattels would cover the ground as quickly and as noiselessly as during one of those 'quick changes' of which the modern stage-manager is enamoured. If only everything in an everyday apartment were on castors, and could be got rid of almost at a touch! Time was when theatrical chairs and tables and the like had to be removed by the agency of gentlemen in livery, who were received by the 'gods' with an effusive welcome as embarrassing as it was spontaneous. The custom still obtains in more old-fashioned stage circles, but in the higher theatrical

spheres such methods are now thought antiquated. We do not drop the curtain, and effect our alteration of scene behind its friendly back; the acme of art, it is held, is reached when we do all this sort of thing *coram populo.* The stage is darkened, but the public easily witnesses the transformation —the scene itself turning inside out, and the *impedimenta* going off, prompt side or O. P., according to arrangement.

But the furniture of stageland is not remarkable only in its going out and comings in. It has other special peculiarities. To begin with, it all faces to one side of the room—the side which does not exist, the side practically occupied by the auditorium. It would be more natural if the sofas, and so on, were grouped as in any ordinary apartment; but that would not be in accordance with tradition—with the invention of the dramatic authors or with the experience of the stage-managers. In stageland everything radiates towards one point—that point, apparently, being the conductor's desk. Apart from

that general principle, there are variations in the character of furniture, which may be broadly divided into the comic and the sentimental. Where comedy or pathos reign respectively, the very chairs and tables have a particular form and destiny. You can tell a low-comedy room or a melodramatic room directly you set eyes upon it. You have only to note the shape and quality of the 'properties,' in order to gauge the nature of the coming imbroglio. No one is so devout a believer in the theory of appropriate 'environment' as is your stagey stage-director.

Take the stage chair for example. When you see an old-fashioned, high-backed stuffed-arm variety placed by the fireside, you know what to expect. The old man or old woman of the play will come in and sit down, and begin to maunder about the son or daughter who has been 'Lost in London,' or in foreign lands or somewhere, but who will presently enter and go through an affecting scene of recognition and reunion. On the other hand, if the locale be a drawing-room and the furniture

all white and gold, and if the low comedian arrives and is struck (as usual) with awe at what he sees, you know perfectly well what will happen. He will sit down upon a particularly springy chair, and make-believe to be much alarmed in the first place and childishly delighted in the second. Stage chairs have their purposes written on the face of them. There is that into which the pale and suffering heroine drops, on her return from her fruitless search for work, or for her husband, or for some other thing or person. There is that, again, on which the comic old man perches himself gingerly, preparatory to slipping off suddenly, and thus awaking the guffaws of the pit.

When two chairs are brought down almost to the footlights, the *habitué* resigns himself to his fate. There is going to be a long confab between two of the characters, beginning with 'It is now some twenty years,' or 'I was but a little child,' or thereabouts. This used to be the usual thing in old comedy, but it has now crept into melodrama. Indeed, in

stageland, people have a singular weakness for sitting in the middle of the room. It never occurs to them to draw up to a table unless some villainy has to be concocted. Then a table, and a chair on each side of it, are indispensable. One conspirator sits on one chair, and the other conspirator on the other, and they talk across the table in very loud whispers. It is apparently for reasons of this sort that most stage tables are oblong, and not round. You do not often come across a round table in stageland, even in a drawing-room. You cannot hold conference over it; you cannot make love over it; it renders flirtation impossible; and on the boards, in fact, has scarcely any *raison d'être.* The sofa is used occasionally for love-making; but for that purpose the newer-fashioned settee, and especially that of the *vis-à-vis* sort, is much preferred.

It is notable that, in stageland, there are very few book-cases. The people have evidently very little time for reading, for, even where libraries are supposed to be depicted,

books and cases are alike conspicuous by their paucity. Even Joseph Surface, though he invites Lady Teazle to come and pronounce upon his literary acquisitions, has very little in that way to show her, and what he has is rather too obviously of the 'false-back' order. Probably there would be more book-cases on the stage if there were fewer chiffoniers and escritoires. But then, these are not likely ever to be fewer, but are likely rather to increase. They are the most useful things on theatrical territory. They are as much utilized as—perhaps more utilized than —the chairs and tables. No dramatist of to-day (or yesterday) could get on without them. Does the heroine want money with which to buy off for a time the importunities of the villain? She goes straight to the escritoire for it: it is sure to be there—and, moreover, to the exact amount required. Does the hero want a letter or some other document which, apparently, he has not seen, or even thought of, for years? It is all right: it is in the escritoire, quite handy, usually not even under

lock and key—the people of stageland are so very careless or so very guileless.

It would take too long, however, even to hint at all the eccentricities of stage furnishing. Otherwise one would like to know why it is that, in so many establishments, by no means the poorest, the hat-rack-cum-umbrella-stand is brought into the sitting-room, with the result that the *personæ* are continually either taking off their hats or putting them on, and causing the sensitive spectator to writhe visibly. It is clear that the theatrical upholsterer is a very different being from the tradesman of ordinary life; he works on different principles, and produces different effects.

TRA LA LA!

IT was perhaps inevitable that, when Mr. Burnand made up his mind to burlesque 'La Tosca,' the 'La' in the title should suggest to him the prefix of 'Tra la!' It happily hints at the idea of travesty and merriment. Of late years the exclamation has been made specially familiar by the famous duet in 'The Mikado' about the flowers that bloom in the spring, and it has now obtained a vogue and a popularity which it has not possessed since the Elizabethan period, in which, apparently, it took its rise.

'Tra la la!' to be sure, is not the only old English refrain whose renewed acceptability is due to the ingenuity of Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Sir Arthur, as everybody knows, has a happy knack of imitating—and

sometimes equalling, if not surpassing—the madrigals and other ditties of the sixteenth century, and Mr. Gilbert, conscious of the fact, has not been slow to give him opportunity. One thinks at once of the duet between the lovers in 'The Pirates of Penzance,' with its refrain of 'Fal la la la, fal la la la;' one remembers, too, the same refrain as sung by the sentry in 'Iolanthe,' by the heroine in 'Patience'—

> 'Think of the gulf 'twixt them and me—
> "Fal la la la" and "Miserie!"'

and by the quartet of singers in 'The Mikado:'

> 'Yet until the shadows fall
> Over one and over all
> Sing a merry madrigal—
> Fal-la, Fal-la!'

The Gilbert-Sullivan operas are, in truth, a mine of reminiscence of these vocal forms. Both author and composer have drunk deep of the well of old English song and melody undefiled. To the musician and the musical amateur one of the great charms of the 'Sor-

cerer' series is the frequent occurrence of such phrases as 'Sing hey,' 'Sing hey to you,' 'Hey willow, willow waly O,' 'Tarantara, tarantara, tarantara,' 'Taradiddle, taradiddle,' and even 'Titwillow, titwillow, titwillow'—for all of which, more or less, an Elizabethan origin can be claimed.

We do not, nowadays, spontaneously burst forth into 'Tra la la!' and so on—we are too conventional and respectable for that; but this seems to have been the habit of our excellent forefathers, who, whether pensive or otherwise, were not so anxious as we all now are to be perfectly intelligible in every utterance. It was enough for them that in this inarticulate manner they gave some sort of expression to their emotions, grave or gay. They were fond of the refrain, and they used it freely; it imparted to their melodies a 'dying fall' of the sort that gave special pleasure, it will be remembered, to the Duke in 'Twelfth Night.' Varied, indeed, and were the 'open sounds' with which the Elizabethans were wont to conclude the various divisions

of their songs. The 'Fal la la' ending seems to have been especially agreeable to them; you cannot look through one of the old song-books without coming upon it over and over again. It is to be found in Morley's 'First Book of Ballets to Five Voices' (1595), in Weelkes' 'Ballets and Madrigals' (1598), and in Jones's 'A Musical Dream' (1609), to name no others. It is used, generally, not in a joyous sense, like 'Tra la la,' but in a sentimental fashion, to portray the desolate feeling of unhappy lovers.

Similarly melancholy in tone is the 'Heigh ho!' of Greene, Shakespeare, Munday, and the rest. It represents a deep-drawn sigh, and figures prominently in the 'sad songs' of the period. More lively are the 'Hey nonny no!' of Middleton, and the 'Hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino!' of the bard of Avon, both of which seem to have been great favourites with the musicians and singers of their time. One finds, however, great variety in these refrains. There is, for example, the 'Sing, willow, willow, willow' of Desdemona's song,

which, no doubt, suggested to Nicholas Rowe his 'Ah, willow, willow; ah, willow, willow,' and was, possibly, the forerunner of the 'Tit-willow' of the 'Mikado.' A kind of prototype can be found, also, for Mr. Gilbert's 'Tara-diddle, taradiddle, tol, lol, lay' in one of the ditties brought together by Thomas Weelkes, the chorus of which is as incomprehensible as anyone could desire:

'Farra diddle dino,
This is idle fino.'

'Ty hye! ty hye!' begins the following verse, and one would like to know what that meant —if it meant anything.

Of the Gilbertian 'Tarantara, tarantara, tarantara' we seem to get an inkling in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, where one of the choruses runs in this way:

'Hark how the trumpets sound,
Hark how the hills rebound,
Tara, tara, tara, tara, tara!'

But an even closer analogy may perhaps be discovered in a ditty lately reprinted from the

Christ Church manuscripts, which concludes with:

> 'Come, ladies, then, and take a part,
> And as we sing, dance ye!
> Tarranta ta-ta-ta-ta-tararantina,' etc.

In the 'Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie' of Nicholas Udall, in his 'Gammer Gurton's Needle,' we may perhaps have the first cousin of 'Tra la, tra la,' or is 'Trillarie' only an invented rhyme for 'Marjorie'? The old song-writers were very clever in the origination or adoption of refrains like these. In one of their products we find an exclamatory line of this description—'Ce! la! ho! ho! hu!'—well worthy of a tribe of savages. Elsewhere we come across 'Ti-ha, tah-ha!' and are not surprised that a contemporary satirist observed:

> 'Let such rhymes no more disgrace
> Music sung of heavenly race.'

It was high time that a protest should be made against them—against gibberish compared with which the 'Humbledum, humble-

dum,' and 'Tweedle, tweedle, twino,' of an anonymous bard, sound almost sensible.

But, of course, into all these song-phrases the element of *onomatopœia* enters largely. They are what they profess to be—mere jingle, invented only to give voice to the dominant mood of the singer. One can trace in them a vague attempt to reproduce natural or artificial sounds, such as the lapping of water and the blare of the trumpet. In all of them the vowel-effect is very prominent, so as to give ease in utterance. In some of the later refrains, such as 'Tooral li rooral,' 'Fol di rol lay,' and similar inventions, the object has been definitely comic. The simple old exclamations have died out, save in the conscious parodies, or have to be sought in the folk-songs of the more unsophisticated European peoples.

TALES WITHOUT TONGUES.

IN a contribution to the magazines, a ten-pound note was lately represented as supplying some particulars about 'the circulating medium,' being endowed for the purpose with the necessary literary capacity. The device is old, and, I venture to think, clumsy. Originally, of course, it had the merit of freshness, but it soon grew stale. The first fables and apologues were composed in this fashion. Members of the animal and vegetable kingdom were, at an early period of the world's history, gifted by scribes and story-tellers with the ability to say what they thought of what they had seen. By-and-by the privilege was extended from natural to manufactured things—a still greater strain upon the fancy. That animals in the early world

should talk in parables made no great demands upon imagination; that trees and plants or water should do so, called for more make-believe; that the inanimate creations of man should do so, was difficult of acceptance, save by the inmates of the nursery, whose faith, happily, is without bounds.

The writers who have from time to time utilised the device I speak of have, necessarily, been at more or less pains to make their own particular use of it as reasonable as possible. When, for example, Dr. Bathurst sent to *The Adventurer* his paper, called 'The Adventures of a Halfpenny,' in which the halfpenny tells its own story, he represented himself as hearing the tale when he was more or less drowsy.

'As it happened [he says] to be the evening of a day of fatigue, . . . I insensibly fell into a kind of half-slumber; when, to imagination, the halfpenny, which then laid before me upon the table, erected itself upon its rim, and from the Royal lips stamped on its surface articulately uttered the following narration.'

That narration over, the listener awoke, and at once set down upon paper all that he

had heard—how the halfpenny had been illegitimately coined, had been sold with others to a Jew, had by him been drafted off to a coffee-shop or gin-shop, had afterwards been quicksilvered and passed off as a shilling, had been knocked about by a small boy and his friends, and, finally, after passing through various other hands, had come into those of the writer in *The Adventurer.*

Here, it will be seen, the machinery is simple. The 'Adventures of a Halfpenny' occupy only the small space of an essay, and required little prologue or epilogue. When, however, Charles Johnston, some few years after, sat down to pen 'Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea'—a somewhat elaborate tale, in multitudinous short chapters—he invented a much more complicated basis for his work. The 'adventures' were supposed to have been written down by an aged mystic, who was one day contemplating a bowl of liquid gold, from which he hoped to extract certain elements, when he saw a 'blue effulgence' break from the receptacle,

and play about the 'genial vase.' His senses, he says, sank under the pressure, and he was dissolved in a trance, when

> 'a voice, celestially harmonious, encouraged me to raise my eyes, and I beheld the body of the effulgence condense into an incorporeal substance in the form of a spirit, while a placid shade softened the fierceness of the radiance and made it tolerable to human sense.'

This apparition announced itself as Chrysal, the spirit of the gold in the bowl, 'come to reveal' to the mystic 'the mysteries of nature.' He explains that

> 'in the economy of nature, to ease the trouble, and keep up the state of its great author, a subordination of ministerial spirits executes the system of his government in all its degrees; one of whom, for the greater order and expedition, is made to actuate every divided particle of matter in this immense universe.'

Chrysal declines to say whence he came at the beginning of things: all he will confess is that his present state of existence began in a gold-mine in Peru, where the piece of metal he animated was dug up, to be afterwards handed over to the refiners. It was first purloined by a Peruvian, who

bestowed it, and others like it, upon his father-confessor. It was next moulded into a crucifix, and afterwards into a doubloon, in which state it reached England, where it was re-shaped into guinea form. It is at this point that the story proper begins, though twelve chapters have already been filled by the preliminaries. Chrysal now goes from hand to hand in a variety of classes, of some of whose members he has a good deal that is caustic to say. How, it may be asked, came a piece of gold to possess the faculty of observation as well as of expression? The author has got over that difficulty early in the story. He has made the spirit of gold inform the mystic that,

'besides that intuitive knowledge common to all spirits, we of superior orders, who animate this universal monarch, Gold, have also a power of entering into the hearts of the immediate possessors of our bodies, and there reading all the secrets of their lives.'

Seeing that the object of 'Chrysal's' author was simply to supply a series of social sketches, it seems a pity that he should have taken all

this trouble to provide for them a peg or thread so unnecessarily *outré*. This fault, however, has been committed by greater men than he—notably by no less a person than Smollett, who, when he desired to satirize the leaders of political parties in England towards the end of the reign of George III. and at the beginning of that of George IV., not only shifted the scene of his satire to Japan (which was legitimate enough), but so arranged his narrative that it should appear as 'The Adventures of an Atom.' He represents the 'editor' of his work, one 'Nathaniel Peacock,' as sitting alone in his study at night, meditating on the uncertainty of sublunary enjoyment, when suddenly he hears—apparently proceeding from a chink or crevice in his own pericranium—a shrill small voice, which announces itself as 'an atom':

'I am one of those atoms, or constituent particles of matter, which can neither be annihilated, divided, nor impaired. . . . We are simply endued with such efficiency of reason as cannot be expected in an aggregate body. . . . Those ideas which we possess we cannot communicate except once in a thousand years, and

then only when we fill'—as this atom fills—'a certain place in the pineal gland of a human creature. . . . For the benefit of you miserable mortals, I am determined to promulge the history of one period, during which I underwent some strange revolutions in the empire of Japan, and was conscious of some political anecdotes now to be divulged for the instruction of British ministers.'

Whereupon Nicholas is exhorted to take up his pen, and to write down from dictation the political romance which forms the *raison d'être* of the volume.

As a variation on these guineas and atoms and the like, more recent fictionists have, on occasion, put their stories in the mouths of animals, as Ouida did in the case of 'Puck.' This, as I have said, is a shade less preposterous than the other method; but it handicaps the narrator quite unnecessarily. Either the personality of the supposed story-teller must be kept well to the fore, in which case it is apt to become a nuisance; or else it must be obtruded only now and then, in which case one wonders why one was bothered with it at all. Certain it is, that when romancers resort to those *ad cap-*

tandum tricks they greatly inconvenience themselves in some respects, without obtaining any corresponding advantage. They give a momentary sense of piquancy, but that soon disappears. The sense of probability speedily asserts itself, and, though we may admit the cleverness of the *tour de force*, we may regret it all the same. The thing may often be done well; but why do it at all?

FUNERAL VERSE.

WHEN Lord Napier of Magdala was carried to his last resting-place, there was wonder whether the incident would find a celebrant in verse. This was hardly likely—not so much because the requisite capacity was wanting, as because the last words on such subjects would seem to have been said. Who, for example, could hope to surpass or even equal the elaborate strain in which Lord Tennyson sang of Wellington and his obsequies?—a strain of which Emerson wrote that it was 'a more magnificent monument than any or all of the histories that record that commander's life';—a strain so superlatively fine that, in comparison with it, the lines written by Dante Gabriel Rossetti on 'Wellington's Funeral' seem turgid and ineffective.

And yet Rossetti's verses are impressive enough in their way. 'This soul's labour,' says the poet, somewhat echoing Tennyson, 'shall be scann'd And found good;' and, in the last verse, he says:

'Wellington,
Thy great work is but begun:
With quick seed his end is rife,
Whose long tale of conquering strife
Shows no triumph like his life
Lost and won.'

It so happens that what the Laureate and the painter-poet wrote concerning the funeral of the victor at Waterloo might be taken as applying, almost word for word, to Lord Napier. That admirable soldier had no Waterloo to fight, but his personal character was singularly like Wellington's in its simplicity and modesty.

We English are a generous nation, after all; and while Tennyson and Rossetti have sung the praises of the Iron Duke, an English poetess was found, in the person of Mrs. Browning, to write scarcely less genially of his great opponent, Napoleon, on the

occasion of the burial of his remains in France. 'I do not praise this man,' said Mrs. Browning,

> 'But since he had
> The genius to be loved, why let him have
> The justice to be honoured in his grave.
> I think this nation's tears, thus poured together,
> Better than shouts. I think this funeral
> Grander than crownings, though a Pope bless all.
> I think this grave stronger than thrones.'

In a different tone were Thackeray's rhythmic comments on 'the second funeral of Napoleon':

> 'And what care we for war and wrack,
> How kings and heroes rise and fall?
> Look yonder! In his coffin black,
> There lies the greatest of them all! . . .
>
> 'He fought a thousand glorious wars,
> And more than half the world was his,
> And somewhere, now, in yonder stars,
> Can tell, mayhap, what greatness is.'

There must needs be something specially pathetic about the obsequies of a great warrior, be he soldier or sailor; and the fact has not escaped the notice of the poets. After all his triumphs with the sword, the great fighter succumbs to the inevitable

attack of the still more irresistible swordsman—Death. Sir John Moore wins his battle, but, before he has time to judge of its effects, is himself laid beneath the sod, his burial forming the subject of lines which are among the most familiar in the language—though, probably, Sir John himself is a *nominis umbra* to most of those who know by heart the Rev. Charles Wolfe's too-much-recited poem. Of the funeral march of a much greater than he, much more illustrious in the history of the world—the Cid—another English poetess has sung, in sufficiently impressive strains, telling how

'They reared the Cid on his barbèd steed,
Like a warrior mailed for the hour of need,
And they fixed the sword in the cold right hand
Which had fought so well for his fathers' land,
And the shield from his neck hung bright.

'With a measured pace, as the pace of one,
Was the still death-march of the host begun;
With a silent step went the cuirassed bands;
Like a lion's tread on the burning sands;
And they gave no battle-shout.'

From the pen of the same writer—Mrs. Hemans—came a ballad of the obsequies of

William the Conqueror, embodying the legend according to which the great soldier's followers were compelled, at the last, to buy 'with gold a place for their leader's dust'—'a little earth for him whose banner flew so far.' To Longfellow we owe a picturesque account of the burial of a 'red chief,' followed by the slaying of his steed, whose soul, the Indian thinks, rejoins that of his master in the happy hunting-grounds. Mr. Whittier, too, has described, in the 'Funeral Tree of the Sokokis,' an Indian burial custom at once curious and interesting, and significant of the varied honours paid to the successful warrior in different parts of the world.

Mrs. Hemans paints a very touching picture of the interment of a young soldier 'in the shadow of the Pyramid,' where 'the desert's parting sun' has 'a field of death surveyed.' But there is, perhaps, more pathos in a burial at sea than in any, of any sort, which takes place on land. The poetess just named was, no doubt, as con-

scious of this fact as anybody, and her 'Dirge' suggested by it is one of the most successful of her efforts.

> 'Lonely, lonely, is thy bed,
> Never there may flower be shed,'

writes she of an unnamed sailor, who had distinguished himself in 'battle high and free.' And her sister-rhymer, Eliza Cook, was not behindhand in paying tribute to yet another youthful seaman, who, dying 'far from land,' was 'lowered down the ship's dark side; a plunge—a splash—and our task was o'er.' Even better known are the Rev. H. F. Lyte's verses 'On a Naval Officer Buried in the Atlantic'—in mid-ocean, where he 'sleeps serene, and safe from tempest and from billow.'

All classes of the community have had their turn in this species of celebration of the most distinguished of their members. Take the statesmen, for example. One thinks at once of Rogers's lines, written in Westminster Abbey after the funeral of C. J. Fox:

'Still do I see (while thro' the vaults of night
The funeral-song once more proclaims the rite)
The moving Pomp along the shadowy Aisle,
That, like a Darkness, filled the solemn Pile.'

Or take the men of letters. Did not Longfellow devote a sonnet to 'The Burial of the Poet,' and did not Mr. Browning make poetry out of 'A Grammarian's Funeral'? Nor have the humbler units lacked a *vates sacer*. The obsequies of the poor have been portrayed by Eliza Cook; those of the very young by Mrs. Hemans. There are few more affecting lyrics in the language than Mr. J. W. Riley's picture of 'The Little White Hearse,' which goes 'glimmering by,' making the man on the coal cart 'smut the lid of either eye,' and causing a stranger to give a ragged child a coin—'she knew not why.'

Of the romance of burial we have a striking instance in the anonymous ballad which tells how the Scottish maiden, finding her true knight slain, proceeded to give him sepulture:

'I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed and whiles I sat,
I digged a grave and laid him in,
And happed him with the sod so green.

'But think nae ye my heart was sair
When I laid the mould on his yellow hair;
Think ye nae my heart was wae,
When I turn'd about, away to gae?'

Here the poet strikes a note which vibrates loudly in the general heart.

CRUSOE'S REFLECTIONS.

NOT very long ago, there was sold in London, for the very respectable sum of fifty-five pounds, a copy of the first edition of 'Robinson Crusoe' in its complete form. I say 'in its complete form,' because otherwise I might appear to mean only the 'Life and Strange Surprising Adventures,' which, together with the 'Farther Adventures' of Crusoe, appeared in the year 1719. These two volumes contain all that is usually understood by 'Robinson Crusoe,' and yet they do not comprise the whole work as it left the hand of Defoe. The 'Adventures' and the 'Farther Adventures,' perhaps because they had been so popular and profitable, and because the author desired, quite properly, to make hay while the sun shone, were followed in the year 1720 by a

supplementary volume—'Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe; with his Vision of the Angelick World. Written by Himself'—a copy of which was lately brought under the hammer, along with its better-known predecessors.

The 'Serious Reflections' are quite an integral part of the story to which they were appended, but from which they have for many years been divorced. It was as a frontispiece to the 'Reflections' that Defoe gave publicity to his map of Crusoe's island—a composition which cannot be commended either for its æsthetic attractions or for its observance of the laws of distance and proportion. Purposely elementary as a piece of draughtsmanship, this sketch or plan is sufficiently diverting, and it is rather surprising that it has not been reproduced in facsimile for the delectation of the young people in succeeding generations. The 'Reflections' have this farther connection with the 'Adventures,' that, in the preface,

the author takes the opportunity of insisting upon the essential reality and truthfulness of that narrative. 'The Story, though Allegorical, is also,' says Defoe, 'Historical, and is the beautiful Representation of a life of unexampled Misfortunes, and of a Variety not to be met with in the World':—

'Farther, there is a Man alive, and well-known, too, the Actions of whose life are the just Subject of these Volumes, and to whom all or most Part of the Story directly alludes; this may be depended upon for Truth, and to this I set my Name.'

It is generally accepted, by those who have closely studied the subject, that Defoe here alludes to himself and his own personal history, which was one of much vicissitude and suffering, and especially of isolation from his fellows. 'The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe,' says Defoe,

'are one whole Scheme of real Life of eight and twenty Years, spent in the most wandering, desolate, and afflicted Circumstances that ever Man went through. . . . In a Word, there's not a Circumstance in the imaginary Story but has its just Allusion to a real Story, and chimes, Part for Part, and Step for Step, with the inimitable life of Robinson Crusoe.'

The 'Serious Reflections,' then, are necessary to the perfect completeness of any edition of 'Robinson Crusoe,' to which Defoe was shrewd enough to affiliate them as closely as he could. He even goes so far as to say, in his preface to the 'Reflections,' that the 'Adventures' arose out of them rather than they out of the 'Adventures.' The fable, he declares, is always for the moral, not the moral for the fable. Let those believe who can. 'Robinson Crusoe'—first part and second part—was a popular 'hit,' and, in publishing these 'Reflections' of Crusoe's, the author sought to follow up one success by another, with a sole view, we may not uncharitably believe, to the filling of his purse. Having told his tale, he not unnaturally bethought him of the device of drawing from it a series of salutary morals, which, as the supposed work of Crusoe, might 'take' the public. And so, accordingly, he makes his hero open the 'Reflections' with an 'introduction,' in which Crusoe declares that he must have made very little

use of his solitary and wandering years, if, after such a scene of wonders, he had nothing to say, and had made no observations which might be useful and instructing, as well as pleasant and diverting, to those that were to come after him.

As the prince of solitaries, Crusoe naturally begins with a discourse 'of Solitude,' showing how 'uncapable' it is to make us happy and how 'unqualify'd' for the Christian life. Speaking for himself, he says that he enjoys 'much more Solitude in the Middle of the greatest Collection of Mankind in the World' —that is to say, in London—than he could say he ever enjoyed during his eight-and-twenty years upon a desolate island. Solitude, as a retreat from human society, for religious or philosophical reasons, Crusoe regards as 'a meer Cheat.' It can neither answer the end it proposes, nor qualify us for the duties of religion.

'Let the Man that would reap the Advantage of Solitude . . . learn to retire into himself: Serious Meditation is the Essence of Solitude; all Retreats into Woods and Desarts are short of this.'

Thence Crusoe passes on to pen 'an Essay upon Honesty,' in the course of which he says, very shrewdly, that it is an easy thing to maintain a character for uprightness when a man has no business to employ him and no want to pain him. When exigencies and distresses pinch a man, then, says Crusoe, is the time to prove the honesty of his principle. Elsewhere, in the same essay, he observes, somewhat cynically, that he who is forward to reproach the infirmities of other men's honesty is very near a breach of his own; an honest man is always tender of his neighbour's character from the sense of his own frailty.

On the immorality of conversation and the vulgar errors of behaviour, this sententious mariner has much to say; and from these points he is led to a disquisition on the state of religion in the world, concerning which his 'reflections' are 'serious' indeed. He is even induced to 'drop into poetry' on such elevated themes as faith and eternity, the latter of which he

addresses in heroic but somewhat 'stodgy' terms:

'Hail, mighty Circle, unconceived Abyss,
Center of Worlds to come, and Grave of this:
Great Gulph of Nature, in whose mighty Womb
Lyes all that Thing call'd Past, that Nothing call'd
To come.

'Ever and Never, both begun in thee,
The weak Description of Eternitie,
Meer Sounds which only can thy Being confess;
For how should Finite Words the Infinite express?
Thou art Duration's modern Name,
To be, or to have been, in thee are all the same.'

Farther on, he 'reflects' that

'In vain are glorious Monuments of Fame,
Which Fools erect t' immortalise a Name;
Not half a Moment, when compar'd with thee,
Lives all their fancy'd Immortalitie.'

After this come chapters 'of listning to the Voice of Providence,' and 'of the Proportion between the Christian and the Pagan World,' with which proportion Crusoe pronounces himself very far from satisfied. He mentions those quarters of the globe in which Christianity reigns, but is

'loth to say we should take this for a Fulfilling of the Promise made to the Messiah, that His Kingdom

should be exalted above all Nations, and the Gospel be heard to the End of the Earth. . . . I expect in the Fulfilling of these Promises, that the Time will come when the Knowledge of God shall cover the Earth, as the Waters cover the Sea.'

Here, of course, we discern the voice of Defoe, rather than of Crusoe, very plainly. But throughout the 'Serious Reflections,' it must be confessed, Defoe is not too anxious to maintain perfect consistency and probability in the thoughts he assigns to his hero. Every now and then, he pulls himself up, and introduces some passage which might be supposed to be characteristic of Crusoe; but in the main it is only too obviously Defoe the polemist who is speaking. That, no doubt, is why the 'Reflections' have dropped out of the later editions of 'Robinson Crusoe.' They have, nevertheless, an interest of their own, especially in the light they throw upon the genesis of the immortal tale, and upon the personal idiosyncrasies of its author.

THE POETRY OF LONDON.

ONE of the most interesting of recent books of verse is that to which 'A London Plane-Tree' gives the title: the work of a young writer of great promise—since deceased—who, among her other abounding merits, appears to have had a genuine fondness, actual or literary, for the sights and sounds of London. In the volume to which I refer, she celebrates, not only 'the plane-tree in the square,' but the 'straw in the street,' in which there is always so much pathos; London in March, and London in July; 'the ruby lights of the hansom,' and the 'topmost summit' of the omnibus; the 'bird of ill-omen' who calls out 'special editions,' and the man who 'grinds out the tune' on the piano-organ; finally, the 'London

poets' who 'trod the streets and squares where now I tread.'

Of these poets there have been many: not those only who were born in London, nor those only who wrote about London's fashionable life; but those who found in London as a whole, or London as a spectacle, in London streets, buildings, institutions, life, or what not, the inspiration of their song.

Of the Great City, as a whole, poets have spoken very much according to their idiosyncrasies. Dr. Johnson made it the subject of an elaborate satire; for the latter-day James Thomson it was the 'City of Dreadful Night.' Long before either of them, Cowley had called it a 'monster,' and declared that, if all the fools and wicked men were to leave it, it would become 'a village less than Islington,' 'a solitude almost.' Arthur Clough so far agreed with this estimate of London that, in one of his satiric moods, he held it to be the one place in which,

> 'In the church, and at the bar,
> On 'Change, at court, where'er they are,
> The devil takes the hindmost, O!'

Happily, Herrick, for one, thought much more highly of the Metropolis. He wrote the apostrophe :

> ' O place ! O people ! manners ! fram'd to please
> All nations, customes, kindreds, languages !'

Cowper, too, said of the London of his day that it was ' by taste and wealth proclaimed The fairest capital of all the world.' ' Where finds philosophy her eagle eye '—' where has commerce such a mart '—he asked, if not in London?

> ' Babylon of old
> Not more the glory of the earth than she,
> A more accomplished world's chief glory now.'

For many poets the chief charm of London has lain in its associations, historical and literary. For Robert Leighton, for instance, it was the place ' where Shakespeare wrote,' ' where are the very stones that Milton trod,' and so on. London, in his view, was the buskined stage of history, the archive of the past. It was the heart, the centre, of the living world. Wordsworth devoted the whole

seventh book of 'The Prelude' to reflections suggested by his residence in London, and a very graphic account he gives of its phenomena. He speaks of the 'endless stream of men and moving things,' 'the quick dance of colours, lights, and forms,' 'the deafening din,' 'the string of dazzling wares, shop after shop.' His description of what he saw, in 1802, from Westminster Bridge, need not be repeated. Earth, he thought, had not anything to show more fair. Joanna Baillie had been equally struck with admiration, when she viewed London 'through the clear air, from Hampstead's heathy height,' when she saw 'England's vast capital in fair expanse,' its 'towers, belfries, lengthened streets, and structures fair.' Wordsworth described

> 'The river proudly bridged; the dizzy top
> And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs
> Of Westminster; the giants of Guildhall; . . .
> The Monument; and that Chamber of the Tower
> Where England's sovereigns sit in long array.'

In like manner, Miss Baillie had something to say about 'St. Paul's high dome,' and 'the

towers of Westminster, her Abbey's pride.' For a still more terse and graphic picture of the city's many beauties — for, perhaps, the tersest and most picturesque description ever given of them—we have only to turn to the pages of 'Don Juan.'

Other poets have dwelt at different times upon London's separate charms of street and edifice. The right mode of walking along the metropolitan thoroughfares was sung long ago by Gay. Later authors have found in individual streets a number of suggestions for poetic treatment. The late H. S. Leigh devoted a whole volume to 'Strains from the Strand'; and Mr. Beatty Kingston has pictured for us, in a recent volume, the glory of being the 'member' for that locality. How the Laureate was led to call Wimpole Street 'long' and 'unlovely'; how Messrs. Locker, Dobson, and Leigh have sounded the praises of Rotten Row; how Messrs. Locker and Cholmondeley Pennell have sentimentalized about Pall Mall; how Mr. Locker again, and the late Lord Lytton, both discoursed of

St. James's Street; how Mr. Lewis Morris and Mr. James Cochrane have both poetised on Regent Street; how Mr. Locker, yet again, has delighted in Piccadilly; and how an anonymous writer has even found something to write about in Oxford Street—these things should be familiar to most. Clough has some lines that occurred to him in a London square. Calverley portrayed the attractions of the Burlington Arcade, and Walter Thornbury's muse was stirred to melody by Temple Bar. The spectacle of a London maiden trying to cross a crowded street suggested to Mr. Ashby Sterry a pretty rondeau. A poet, indeed, will find poetry in anything. Kensington Gardens, though scarcely rural in their attractions, have inspired at least four poets of uncommon powers—our old friend Tickell, Matthew Arnold, Clough, and Mr. Dobson—Clough associating with it a love idyll of some prettiness, and Mr. Dobson being witched by the warbling of one of its nightingales.

It is just the same when we come to deal with particular buildings in London.

Even they have sufficed to fill the sympathetic rhymer with the required afflatus. Westminster Abbey might fairly inspire the pulses of a poet, as it did in the cases of Beaumont, Tickell, Leighton, and Horace Smith; but St. George's, Hanover Square, and Holland House, the Zoological Gardens, and Waterloo Bridge (to name only a few), have been no less lucky in finding a laureate. Mr. Robert Buchanan has discovered poetic material in a City churchyard; Mr. Locker has a kindly picture of a 'music palace'; and the clubs and theatres have naturally exercised their usual glamour. London rain has had a bard; so have London snow and London fog; even London orange-peel has been seized upon as a subject. The city has been limned as it appears at every season, in every month of the year. And especially well has the pathos of life in it been noted and expounded. In East London, Matthew Arnold was struck by the 'thrice dispirited look' of the 'pale weaver'; in West London, by the misery of the wayside tramp,

'ill, moody, and tongue-tied.' Mrs. Browning sang the woes of the ragged school children; and Mr. Lewis Morris, more generally, has sung those of the 'children of the street.' Mr. Locker has written of the London housemaid, not less touchingly than Hood wrote of the sempstress. In Mr. Buchanan's 'London Poems' may be seen a gallery of pathetic portraits, male and female; while Miss May Kendall has not disdained to take the street-cadger and the crossing-sweeper as the topics of her verse.

London cannot, indeed, complain of its poets; they have done it every justice.

BOTANY ON THE BOARDS.

NO doubt great progress has been achieved of late years in the art of making stage trees and shrubs and flowers seem natural and convincing. In theatrical arboriculture, in particular, great strides have unquestionably been taken. It is nothing new to find the centre of a scene occupied by what, to all appearance, is a genuine tree, with real trunk, arms, leaves, and blossom. In all these respects the stage mechanists of the day can almost, if not quite, deceive the eye. One remembers how successfully this was done in the Lyceum setting of 'Iolanthe' (Mr. Wills's version of 'King Réné's Daughter'), and how truly 'practicable' was the Royal Oak which figured recently at Drury Lane—an oak so royal that it allowed of Mr. Henry Neville's walking up and down

it as if he were walking up and down a private staircase.

There was shown, in 'A Village Priest' at the Haymarket, a tree with branches and blossom so seeming-real that, together with the flowers which skirted the priest's little garden, it almost persuaded us we were gazing upon the works of Nature. Alas! such triumphs of the imitator's skill do but serve too often to show up in brilliant relief the unreality of the mock stone and wood surroundings in the way of house or fence. The effect is very like that of a hansom cab upon the stage: the cab is real enough, but the boards over which it is drawn do not even suggest the wood pavements of our streets. As a rule, it must be allowed, there is not much effort at incongruity of this sort. Too often—indeed, usually—the stage tree is only too obviously of the stage, stagey. Even when 'practicable,' it is so only on the most guileless principles. Mark the ease with which the personages of the drama ascend or descend it. When the comic man goes 'up

a (theatrical) tree,' he does so with suspicious celerity. He does so, of course, on the side hidden from the audience, and for the best of reasons. Is it not with the stage tree as it is with the stage wall? are there not notches or other obliging devices, by which the adventurous climber finds his footing provided for, and by which he, not very greatly daring, reaches the desired point of vantage? One never feels very greatly alarmed for the safety of the most intrepid hero or villain under these particular circumstances. The actor is supposed to be performing a feat of notable difficulty and danger; but our withers are unwrung. That he will get up that tree or over that wall, without discomposure or discomfiture, is as certain as anything in the ways of stageland.

But 'practicable' stage trees have not, after all, the vogue of 'practicable' stage flowers. There is, to be sure, plenty of foliage 'on the flat'—the scene-painter revels in it, giving to it such *vraisemblance* as he can. But of the trees and flowers that aim at

'going as near Nature' as possible, the latter are, of course, by a long way the more numerous. The theatre would be nothing without its flowers. They pervade and scent (in the imagination) the whole of stageland. Albery gave us not only an 'Apple Blossoms,' but a 'Two Roses,' with two pretty scenes of floral incident in it—that in which the two girls count the roses on their respective trees, and that in which they in turn offer a rose to Caleb Deecie, who, though blind, can readily distinguish Ida's offering from that of Lottie. Who does not recollect, in Mr. Gilbert's 'Sweethearts,' not only the lovers' planting of the young sapling, but the flower which the youth begs from the maiden, and the care that the maiden takes of her own floral treasure? Who can forget the poisoned flowers in 'Adrienne Lecouvreur'? Does not the bouquet flourish in comedy as well as in tragedy? Is it not the invariable receptacle of the *billet doux* of the would-be 'deceiver'? The lovers are for ever presenting posies to their lady-loves; and sometimes these are real,

but more often they are not—more often they suggest Mdme. Tussaud rather than Dame Nature. In 'The Colonel' the pretty widow has quite a collection of bouquets: they absolutely rain upon her. But even more in request and common usage is the handful or basket of cut flowers. This is of immemorial antiquity, having its climax in the instance of 'La Tosca,' whose heroine, both French and English, and especially English, makes her first entrance in the guise of a walking Covent Garden.

But, in truth, the engaging heroine of the play is never, or rarely, without her flower-basket or artlessly-arranged bouquet. It is a singular thing, but all eligible young ladies in stageland have a passion for the 'stars that in earth's firmament do shine.' They stick them in their hair or in their waist-bands, but most frequently they carry them prettily in their hands. They usually make their *entrée* in that manner. They convey the impression that floriculture is the badge of all the feminine tribe—or of all, at any rate, that is

young, and handsome, and ingenuous. When they sit down, it is to play artlessly with the flowers in their laps. Apparently, the stage *demoiselle* has nothing whatever to do but to sort and arrange these things. The more interesting the conversation, the more patiently she goes on sorting and arranging them. When the talk flags, she walks over to a table and distributes them among the vases, taking great pains with their appropriate disposal. Can it be that the stage heroine is not really enamoured of flowers, but regards them merely as so many opportunities for harmless by-play? It may be so. On the boards the difficulty is to know what to do with one's hands, and 'leading ladies' solve the problem by coming laden with flowers. One cannot exactly blame them, but the effect is undoubtedly a little monotonous. There is about as much variety in it as in the male characters' constant resort to a pipe or a cigar to fill up the pauses in the conversation.

It is on the lyric boards that botany is seen in its stiffest and least-convincing forms.

Who has ever witnessed a 'garden-scene' in 'Faust' which did not impress him as being delightfully wooden? Those flower-pots are too regular in outline even for a Dutchman to have conceived and executed; those trees and bushes look as if they had been taken out of a child's Noah's Ark. The flower that Siebel picks is, apparently, the only 'practicable' one in the parterre: what would happen if, by chance, he did not fix upon the right one? And the 'He loves me, he loves me not—loves me, loves me not' of Marguerite; suppose, by accident, that the flower chosen would not 'work': what would become of the sentiment of the situation? And what would become, too, of the property-man? That there is danger in stage botany becoming realistic may be allowed: 'real' animals have before now played sad pranks with 'real' trees and shrubs upon the boards. They will sniff at the painted work on canvas, but will pull the bush or sapling out of its wooden soil and demolish it with genuine realism.

BARDS AT THE BOAT RACE.

MANY as are the people who have seen the University Boat Race, those who have never seen it, and are never likely to see it, are obviously in the great majority. To millions it must always be a name, a tradition—nothing more ; it can have for them no more actuality than they can detect in the published descriptions of the present and the past. These reports are apt somewhat to disappoint : the scene of succeeding years is so much the same—always the same variegated crowds, the same humours, the same swift flashing-past, the same brief excitement, the same banquetings. In the nature of things there cannot be any novelty in the repetition of old doings : races must always be rowed and watched in the old way.

Still, a wonderful incentive is enthusiasm. There is no reason to believe that the race has fallen off in popularity among University men, boating men, and the general public; and probably it would be more often and more ably celebrated were it not that the duty has so frequently been undertaken, and in one instance has been so superbly performed. It is not likely that anyone will do so well with the subject—in so confined a space—as Mortimer Collins and G. J. Cayley did in lines which should be familiar to all, and which I, for one, am never tired of quoting:

'Ah, but the joy of the Thames when, Cam with Isis contending,
Up the Imperial stream flash the impetuous Eights!
Sweeping and strong is the stroke as they race from Putney to Mortlake,
Shying the Crab Tree bight, shooting through Hammersmith Bridge;
Onward elastic they strain to the deep low moan of the rowlock;
Louder the cheer from the bank, swifter the flash of the oar!'

There is something epic about this, and other celebrations are apt to suffer by com-

parison with it. Still more realistic pens have, from time to time, been at work, and their products have sometimes had the merit of being graphic, if nothing else. Take the case of a rhymer who 'sang' (as the sentimentalists say) of the race of 1863, 'sending his poem to a magazine.' He began in this way:

'Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, just past dawn of day,
We took the rail, for Putney bound, to view th' aquatic fray!
Rich city men, priests, lawyers, heavy swells, light pamphleteers—
Posse (of many a) *comitatus* hardly meeting else for years.'

Then he went on to give us other sidelights upon the popular carnival:

'Anon the cabs are coming. Hark to the mingled din
Of niggers, "cures," "shies," Punch, and cries of "Oxford's sure to win!"'
And gentlemen and gents prick fast across Barnes' dusty plain,
Bestriding hired cavalry from the fair land of Cockaigne.'

Here, however, we have more vigour and comicality than poetry, of which the subject,

perhaps, is not susceptible. Still, those oft-cited stanzas of Mr. Ashby Sterry's about the 'impartial' maiden onlooker, who

'Twined her fair hair with the colours of Isis,
While those of the Cam glittered bright in her eyes,'

have tenderness and fancy, and paint the lighter and brighter side of the 'event' both lightly and brightly.

Though, as I have said, successive race-days have a large element of sameness, occasionally one of them contrives to stray a little from the regular path, and to secure, consequently, an individuality of its own. Experts always know how to distinguish the race of one year from that of another—by circumstances not patent to the 'outsider'; but even that forlorn personage can bear in mind such notable incidents as the swamping of one of the rival boats, or the rowing of a boat with one man short. This latter variation occurred in 1844, when, at the last moment, the Oxford captain was seized with illness.

'With anguished heart and throbbing head
Bold Menzies, the captain, lay pining abed.

So at the time 'sang' Dr. Henry Hayman, who proceeded to improve the occasion in stirring terms. Despite the catastrophe, the Oxford men won:

> 'Short of an oar—their stroke-oar, too—
> For vict'ry they were not too few.'

So great, indeed, was their triumph, that the poet was fain to exalt them even above fabled heroes:

> 'Talk of Thebes with her champions seven!
> There the tug of war was even.
> At each portal the chief who wat[illegible]ched
> Was with an equal hero matche[illegible]d.
> The warrior bard to fight at od[illegible]ds
> Backed not even his demigods [illegible]er s.
> What would they have deemec[illegible] of Fate,
> If her scales had borne unequa[illegible] freight,
> And the wall, kept by seven, had b[illegible]een assailed by
> eight?'

In the race of 1860, the Cambr[illegible]ch, an [illegible]idge boat was swamped; and, singularly enou[illegible]t across[illegible]gh, Sir (then Mr.) George Trevelyan had had, [illegible]fair land in some sort, a prophetic vision of such a cala[illegible]mity, of which a hint appeared in some preli[illegible]nore vigo[illegible]minary verses written by him in honour of the [illegible]hich the s[illegible] boat:

'As they watched the light jerseys all swimming about,
The nymphs of the Thames, with a splash and a shout,
Cried, "Thanks to rude Boreas"'

for giving such doughty fellows to their arms.

The contest on the 'Imperial stream' is the crown and consummation of the contests between college and college on the waters respectively of the Isis and the Cam. Men have written at least as warmly and excitedly about the local, as about the metropolitan, struggles. Who does not remember Judge Hughes' description of Tom Brown's first race in the St. Ambrose boat—of 'the first bump,' which nearly took away the young freshman's breath?—'Tom feels a little bump behind him, and then a grating sound, as Miller shouts, "Unship oars, bow and three," and the nose of the St. Ambrose boat glides quietly up to the side of the Exeter, till it touches their stroke oar.' It is a vivid piece of writing, and in verse its best counterpart perhaps is to be found in the boating song penned by Mr. Delaware Lewis:

'At length comes the night, fraught with joy and delight,
Of the races. By Jove, it's like heaven,
With the men at the plough calling out, "Go it, bow!"
And the men on the path "Go it, seven!"'

Side by side with this may be put the 'Trinity Boat-song' of Sir George Trevelyan—the Trinity in question being, of course, the Cambridge college, which was happy in having so fluent a rhythmist for its *vates sacer*.

University laureates, however, have not forgotten to illustrate the joys of training as well as of conflict. One of them has drawn a lurid picture of 'Ye Cruelle Coxwayne,' in colours which I venture to turn from Chaucerian to Victorian hue:

'Small is his guise; yet sternly doth he wreak
His wrath on any who from Raleigh's weed
Dare in his presence raise the comely reek;
Nor doth he ever piteous cravings heed,
When for more beer in summer time we plead.'

Mr. Lewis, again, has given an equally vivid account of the abstemious living forced upon the heroes of the oar:

'There's breakfast, you know, where stale bread's all
the go,
With beefsteaks as raw as my hand, sirs.
And cigars we're forbid 'cause they make us to blow,
And the nymphs 'cause they keep us on land,
sirs.'

He who would shine in the boating world must indeed scorn delights and live laborious days. He has undertaken no light thing. In effect he has adopted a profession. Only through tribulation can he arrive at the longed-for goal. We all remember the well-intentioned efforts of Mr. Verdant Green, when he first essayed to distinguish himself on University waters—how, going out in a 'tub,' called the Sylph, he 'passed the University barge in great style;' how, arriving at 'the Gut,' he caught a tremendous crab; and how, before he could recover himself, the tub received a shock, and 'the University eight passed over the place where he and the Sylph had so lately disported themselves.' Mr. Verdant Green was destined never to take a place in the 'Varsity crew.

THE LITERATURE OF SALAD.

'OH, cool in the summer is salad!' cries the poet; and who shall say him nay? That, at least, is an unassailable proposition, if there be such a thing in these contentious times. But why 'in the summer' only? Surely salad is one of the delights—one of the very few delights—of spring; surely it is to salad, quite as much as to love, that a young or middle-aged man's fancy lightly turns at that period of the year. Nay, is there not every provocation so to turn? What first catches the eye on the sideboard of the hotel or the counter of the restaurant? Is it not the fair white bowl brimming over with green things and red — with, say, the verdant endive and that which Calverley calls 'the red root of the beet'? Is it not

the salad, 'crisp and cool,' which soon will be

> 'With polished silver from clean crockery
> Forked up'?

Salad days, indeed! Cleopatra associated hers with greenness of the judgment. We moderns can always associate ours with all that is keenest and brightest in spring vegetation.

There has been no lack of praise of salad. History tells of a poet—an Italian poet, if I mistake not—who wrote verses in its honour. The fact is not surprising. Cooks and epicures have naturally eulogised it. Soyer wanted to know what was more refreshing 'when your appetite seems to have deserted you, or even after a generous dinner. The nice fresh, crisp salad,' he testified, 'full of life and health, seems to invigorate the palate and dispose the masticatory powers to a much longer duration.' Brillat Savarin held that salads refresh without exciting, and make people younger. Everybody remembers the eloquent outburst of Sydney Smith :

'Oh, green and glorious! Oh, herbaceous treat!
'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat.
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl.'

That is to say, he would do so if the concoction were worthy of his attention. And that is just the point. All is not well that takes the name of salad. The elements may be there, but are they duly dealt with? Have they been carefully chosen and as carefully treated? The matter is not one to be lightly touched.

To begin with, it is not everybody who should meddle with it. Rousseau said that to get the right flavour out of salad it should be prepared by a maiden of, say, from fifteen to eighteen summers. Those ages are, perhaps, somewhat too exclusive, but one is almost inclined to argue that none but fair feminine fingers—they must be fair—should be allowed to busy themselves with salad. If Charlotte was charming when cutting bread and butter, she would have been still more so had she been engaged in filling the 'herbaceous' bowl. But there must be art.

There was once a great salad-maker who went from mansion to mansion, of an evening, simply and solely to manufacture the salad for dinner. His fee, they say, was ten guineas a bowl, and it was cheerfully paid. The man was an artist, and well worth the money. Moreover, that way lies fame. That *chef* is remembered for his salads, and it is a glorious memory. It was a similar celebrity that procured for Sydney Smith the acquaintance of a lady of title, who begged to be introduced to him, saying she had so long wished to know him. It then turned out that she had heard a great deal about his recipe for salad, and was desirous to obtain it.

Recipes, forsooth! Who does not possess one? Their name is legion. All the cookery books have a different 'way'—every cook, professional or amateur, has his or her own method of coping with the difficulty. One gathers that there is nothing certain about a salad save the lettuce, the oil, the vinegar, and the salt; nay, even the salt, for some inscrutable reason, is omitted by one great

authority. Lettuce, of course, there must be. It is the foundation of all civilised salad. When *panachée*, says the 'Almanach des Gourmands,' it is a 'salad of distinction.' 'The tender lettuce,' sighs the poet, 'brings a softer sleep.' But when you have once named the lettuce, and the three other materials, all the rest is according to the taste and fancy of the concocter. Says Mrs. Favourite, in the eighteenth-century play: 'Shall I put any mushrooms, mangoes, or bamboons into the sallet?' And the Lady Bonora answers: 'Yes, I prythee, the best thou hast.' Sydney Smith declared for 'the pounded yellow of two hard-boil'd eggs,' 'two boil'd potatoes,' a few 'onion atoms,' some 'mordant mustard,' and, finally, 'a magic *soupçon* of anchovy sauce,' in addition to the four statutory elements.

Nor was 'the witty Canon' the only laureate of the bowl. What said Mortimer Collins in that diverting travestie of the Swinburnian manner of which I have already quoted a scrap? Said he—

'Take endive—like love, it is bitter;
Take beet—for, like love, it is red;
Crisp leaf of the lettuce shall glitter,
And cress from the rivulet's bed;
Anchovies, foam-born, like the lady
Whose beauty has maddened this bard;
And olives, from groves that are shady;
And eggs—boil 'em hard.'

Then there is the American writer's parallel between salad and conversation, showing that the lettuce must be 'fresh and crisp, and so sparkling that you scarcely notice the bitter in it'—that 'it requires a good deal of oil to avoid friction, and keep the company smooth; a pinch of attic salt; a dash of pepper; a quantity of mustard and vinegar, by all means, but so mixed that you will notice no sharp contrasts; and a trifle of sugar.' 'You can put anything, and the more things the better,' Dudley Warner goes on to say, 'into salad, as into a conversation; but everything depends upon the skill of the mixing.' Oh, upright judge! That is precisely where the art comes in.

But here, again, who shall decide when masters disagree? The old proverb, which

everybody recollects and insists on quoting, desiderates only prodigality with the oil, miserliness with the vinegar, judicial prudence with the salt, and insane fury in the stirring. A less venerable authority held that the herbs should be only sprinkled with the oil and vinegar, and afterwards shaken in a sieve, so that a mere flavour of the mixture should adhere to them. One sage having referred to the drying of the leaves of the lettuce, another—Hayward, to wit—declares roundly that they ought never to be wetted, as they thus lose their crispness; they should be used fresh from the garden, the outer leaves removed, and the rest cut or broken into the bowl. In the view, again, of a still more recent discourser on the subject, the one great secret of salad-making is 'the judicious employment of oil, so as to correct the acrid juices of the plant, and yet preserve their several flavours unimpaired.' Such, so far, is the last word of science on the subject.

HORACE IN ENGLAND.

THE present inhabitants of Venusia, the birthplace of Horace, have craved a monument to the poet's memory. To this there could be no objection. It is well that a great man should have an outward and visible memorial in the locality where he came into the world. Such a memorial is less an aid to recollection than a public acknowledgment of fine gifts and fine performances, and an equally public incitement to be worthy of such dignified traditions.

Otherwise, there is probably no writer who less requires a tangible monument than Horace. A much more lasting memorial is to be found in the minds of lettered and learned men all the world over. Horace lives, and always will live, in the enjoyment

he has given, and can always give, to those who are familiar with his works. At once a man of culture and a man of the world, he is always a source of joy to men of the world and of culture. He delights by reason of the glamour of his style and the charm of his philosophy, the one so polished and so easy, the other so genial and so shrewd. Like Virgil, his reign is universal, and his rule is not only admitted but rejoiced in.

Here in England, the tributes to his influence have always been numerous and striking. First of all has come, of course, the perusal and study of his writings, and, after that, the desire to reproduce them, in some way, in the language of the land. Horace has been the favourite author of our public men, and his sway over the ordinary British schoolboy has been no less paramount. Who does not remember the hours he was wont to spend in endeavouring to 'render' certain of the Odes into respectable English rhythm and rhyme? Who has not

tried his hand over and over again at versions of the 'Quis multa gracilis,' the 'Tu ne quaesieris,' the 'Vitas hinnuleo,' the 'Persicos odi,' and the like? Generation after generation has sought to give an English form to these gems of grace and finish.

Happily, only a small proportion of Horatian translators have had the hardihood to give their lucubrations to the press. The first to do this extremely hazardous thing was, it would seem, one Thomas Colwell, whose effusions were originally seen in print three hundred and fifteen years ago. What a number of followers that bold man has had!—some with renderings of the Odes only, or of the so-called 'Satires' only; others, with versions of the Epodes and Epistles, and the Art of Poetry; only a few with 'Englishings' of the whole works. And what a variety has been exhibited by these writers both in metre and in merit! To whom shall the palm be given among all the candidates—to Professor Conington, to the first Lord Lytton, or to Sir Theodore Martin?

These take the lead, the rest being (in comparison) nowhere. Yet can any man lay his hand upon his heart, and say, honestly, that he is satisfied with any one of the three, learned and skilful and enthusiastic as they are? Is it, indeed, in the power of any one man—save he be another Horace, born in English guise, to supply us with 'Englishings,' even of any one section of the Works, which should obtain the suffrages of all men? Rather is the successful translation of Horace an affair of co-operation among many—of a lucky hit here, of a happy thought there—of a gradual accumulation of worthy specimens produced by individual effort from time to time. A collection of such specimens has been made, and it is much better worth our notice than any wholesale rendering which anybody, greatly daring, has produced of his own mind and motion.

There is more likelihood of triumph in the case of liberal paraphrase than in that of direct reproduction. Pope paid Horace the compliment of imitation (in the matter of the

Satires and Epistles), and Byron, we all know, utilized in the best-loved outcome of his Muse the 'Hints' that he derived from the antique Roman. Pope had early come within the mesmeric range of the poet, who, he declared,

> 'Still charms with graceful negligence,
> And without method talks us into sense.'

Horace, he thought, conveyed 'the truest notions in the easiest way.' Nevertheless, there is not much that is Horatian in the Popeian 'Imitations,' and still less of the quality is to be discerned in the Byronic 'Hints.' Much more in the true spirit of the Augustan bard—the spirit of facile gaiety and bland good-fellowship—was the series of rhythmical adaptations written by James Smith (of 'Rejected Addresses' fame) and entitled 'Horace in London.' These lack the felicity of form and epithet that is characteristic of the great original, but they have fluency, neatness, and *bonhomie*, and that is much. Here, for example, are a few

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lines from the lyric suggested by the 'Quis multa gracilis':—

'Say, Lucy, what enamour'd spark
Now sports thee through the gaping Park,
In new barouche or tandem;
And, as infatuation leads,
Permits his reason and his steeds,
To run their course at random?

'Fond youth, those braids of ebon hair,
Which to a face already fair
Impart a lustre fairer—
Those locks which now invite to love—
Soon unconfin'd and false shall prove,
And changeful as the wearer.'

Of late years, a living writer has sought to present to us the spectacle of a 'Horace in Homespun'—a very interesting picture, but nevertheless scarcely convincing. It is not easy to conceive a Horace 'raised north of the Tweed' and talking the broadest Doric. A Scotch shepherd, such as this 'Horace in Homespun' is supposed to be, could be only an imitative Horace, at the best.

Perhaps, however, the influence of Horace, so far as England is concerned, has been greatest in the impulse it has given to the

genius of certain of our rhymers. Men of like temperament have studied him with avidity, and, to a certain extent, have caught his tone. There are traces of a love for Horace in the lyrical measures of Ben Jonson and Herrick. 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may' is obviously in the accent of 'Carpe diem.' Herrick's philosophy was, indeed, very much that of Horace. Prior had not only the Roman's Epicureanism, but much of his facility and gaiety. When he was discovered by Lord Dorset in the bar of his uncle's wine-house at Westminster, he had a copy of the 'Horatii Opera' in his hand, and was at once set to turn an Ode into English. 'Horace,' said Thackeray of Prior, 'is always in his mind.' Horace, we may be sure, was much, if not always, in the mind of Fox, Canning, Luttrell, and Praed, when they penned their verses; just as, in our own days, he has so largely inspired the powers of Messrs. Frederick Locker and Austin Dobson. Wordsworth wrote of Horace as 'Above all writers fit to win the palm of gaiety and wit.'

Leigh Hunt, with a keen scent for the most engaging quality of the poet, declared him the best 'for chatting with from day to day.' Lord Tennyson has celebrated him as 'the old popular Horace, the wise adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay.' But his highest panegyric has been written by Mr. Dobson, who has said:—

'Our "world" to-day's as good, or ill,
As cultured (nearly)
As yours was, Horace! You alone,
Unmatched, unmet, we have not known.'

ENGLISH CHARACTERS.

LA BRUYÈRE'S 'Characters, or Manners of the Age' have once more found a translator into English. They are not, of course, 'characters' in the strict sense of the term. They were based on the models supplied by Theophrastus, whose 'Moral Characters,' dealing with such matters as dissimulation, flattery, ostentation, the newsmonger, the oligarchist, and the like, La Bruyère turned into French, as a sort of preface to his own performance. In this compilation of 'characters,' as he understood them, the Frenchman, it may be noted, had been anticipated by our own Bishop Hall, whose 'Characters of Vertues and Vices,' published early in the seventeenth century, were, no doubt, also suggested by Theophrastus' work. Honesty, faith, humility,

valour, the good magistrate, the hypocrite, the busybody—these were some of the topics on which the Bishop discoursed, and on which he had much to say that was quaint, curious, and edifying.

'Characters,' in the proper acceptation of the word, have been best written—in English—by three men: by Sir Thomas Overbury, by Bishop Earle, and by the Samuel Butler who wrote 'Hudibras.' All flourished in the seventeenth century, and all were inspired in very much the same fashion. They did, in the way of character-drawing, what before them was done, and has been done since, by the romancer and the dramatist. Neither for novelist nor for dramatist was the period covered by these writers favourable; and hence the diversion of so much literary faculty into the paths of satiric prose portraiture. The fact is hardly to be regretted, for in the pages of Overbury, Earle, and Butler may be found a wonderfully complete picture of English character—male and female, rich and poor, urban and

rural—as it was in the times in which these worthies lived. All three authors devote a large part of their volumes to the analysis of abstract qualities; but not less notable are their close and finished sketches of humanity as it took shape in England in those days.

It is interesting to note the respect in which the typical Englishmen of the seventeenth century resembled or differed from the typical Englishmen of the nineteenth. The likeness is more remarkable than the unlikeness. In essence the types are the same in both cases; it is only in details of costume and of manner that the difference is seen. Take, for example, Overbury's description of the 'improvident gay gallant' of that age:

> 'There is a conspiracy between him and his clothes, to be made a puppy. . . . He accounts bashfulness the wickedest thing in the world, and therefore studies impudence. . . . His ordinary sports are cock-fights, but the most frequent, horse-races, from whence he comes home dry-foundered.'

All this seems familiar enough, as does

this further portrayal of a 'gallant' by Earle:

> 'His first care is his dress, the next his body, and in the uniting of these two lies his soul and its faculties. . . . If he be qualified in gaming extraordinary, he is so much the more gentle and complete. . . . He is a kind of walking mercer's shop, and shows you one stuff to-day, and another to-morrow.'

Another town type of the time was the alderman—a ponderous man, Earle calls him, and a substantial; one that would not hastily run into error, for he trod with great deliberation; his talk being commonly of the annals of his mayoralty, and especially of what good government there was in the days of his gold chain. In Earle's gallery we find, also, the constable, whom beggars fear more than they fear the justice—who is a very careful man in his office, but who, if he stays up after midnight, will be taken napping. Of the tobacco-seller of the day, evidently a notable personage, the Bishop quaintly says that 'his shop is the rendezvous of spitting, where men dialogue with their noses, and their communication is smoke.' The player, too, is not

forgotten; and it appears that, then as now, his profession was disliked by some, but applauded by more—that the 'waiting-women spectators' were over ears in love with him, and that ladies sent for him to act in their houses. Thus does history repeat itself indeed.

Certain of Overbury's town 'characters' are among the most wittily treated in his collection. There is the tailor, who is partly an alchemist, because he extracteth his own apparel out of other men's clothes: who is cunning enough at multiplication and addition, but cannot abide subtraction. There is the almanac-maker, whose life is said to be upright, for he is always looking upward—at the stars; 'to them he pays yearly rent, his study, and time; yet lets them out again (with all his heart) at 40s. per annum.' Overbury's tinker belongs both to town and country. He marches all over England with bag and baggage. 'He seems to be very devout, for his life is a continual pilgrimage, and sometimes in humility goes barefoot.'

He is always furnished with a song, '
which his hammer keeping time proves th
he was the first founder of the kettle-dru
'His conversation is unreprovable, for he
ever mending.' More strictly rural is t
'raw young preacher' of Earle, who dra
him with all the vigour of a satirist and
the knowledge of a bishop. 'His collectio
of studies are the notes of sermons, whic
taken up at St. Mary's, he utters in t
country.' The pace at which his serm
goes is rapid, but the labour of it is chie
in the speaker's lungs. 'He preaches b
once a year, though twice on Sunday,
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vignettes of the franklin (or yeoman), and
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maid we read that the golden ears of co
fall and kiss her feet when she reaps the
as if they wished to be bound and l

prisoners by the same hand that felled them. The yeoman is taught by nature to be contented with a little; his own fold yields him both food and raiment. It is to be feared that, in regard to these two types of character, there is some falling-off in the England of to-day; they are somewhat too Arcadian for our tempestuous time.

Butler's 'characters' belong to the latter part of the seventeenth century, when society was beginning to grow in complexity. There is more variety in his selection than there is in those of Overbury and Earle. He deals with such modern types as the leader of a faction, a haranguer, a latitudinarian, a virtuoso, a projector, and so on. And he deals with them very pointedly. Particularly striking is his analysis of the 'intelligencer,' as he calls him, who may be described as the 'London Correspondent' of the time. The description is worth quoting:

'He travels abroad to guess what princes are designing by seeing them at church or dinner. . . . All his discoveries in the end amount only to entries and equipages, addresses, audiences, and visits. . . . He

is factor to certain remote country virtuosos who, finding themselves unsatisfied with the brevity of the *Gazette*, desire to have exceedings of news besides their ordinary commons. To furnish these he frequents clubs and coffee-houses, the markets of news, where he engrosses all that he can light upon; and if that does not prove sufficient, he is forced to add a lie or two of his own making, which does him double service, for it does not only supply his occasions for the present, but furnishes him with matter to fill up gaps in the next letter with retracting what he wrote before.'

This 'character' was penned more than two hundred years ago, and yet it is as true to-day, of the class described, as it was then.

THE POETRY OF PATRIOTISM.

THE editor of the selection from the lyrical poems of Mr. Alfred Austin draws attention to the fact that the poet is pre-eminently a lover, not only of the country, but of country—a lover, not only of England as a geographical unit, but of England as a nation. The claim is well-based, and can be sustained. It is perfectly true; Mr. Austin is one of the most patriotic of our verse-men. Where'er he roams, whatever realms he sees, his heart, untravelled, fondly turns—to England:

> 'I cherish still and hold apart
> The fondest feeling in my heart
> For where, beneath one's parent sky,
> Our dear ones live, our dead ones lie.'

For him, this land is 'this privileged Isle, this brave, this blest, this deathless England.'

He bids 'fair proud England' be 'proud fair England still,' and, meanwhile, declines to believe that she has 'fallen like Rome' or any other empire of the past.

Happily, in all this affection for, and pride in, his native country, Mr. Austin does not by any means stand alone. The line of English patriot poets is a long one, and as distinguished as it is long. It began with great brilliance. There was Warner with his 'Albion's England,' and Daniel with his 'Civil Wars,' and Drayton with his 'Polyolbion' and 'Baron's Wars' and 'Battle of Agincourt,' and Browne with his 'Britannia's Pastorals'—all of them devoted, more or less, to the praise of the country to which the poets belonged, and for which they had a sentiment of genuine admiration. Never, however, have there been such splendid testimonies as our premier poet-dramatist paid to the charms—the virtues and the achievements—of this tiny isle, this 'little body with a mighty heart,' this 'precious stone set in a silver sea.' Shakespeare, as

I have said in a former volume, appears to have had for England an absorbing passion, which found vent in tributes more magnificent than any other land has ever obtained at the hands of its rhymers.

After this, the strain of eulogy was, for a certain period, arrested. The men of the Commonwealth had something weightier to do than to be the Laureates of patriotism: those of the Restoration and the Revolution were too largely influenced by foreign habits of thought, or by solicitude about their heads, to think much, if at all, of the purely patriotic side of life. In the one case they were too indifferent in feeling, and in the other too partizan in their methods, to consecrate their pens to the service and celebration of their country. Later on, our poets began to discourse of the beauties of England as a dwelling-place. Pope wrote of Windsor Forest, Dyer of Grongar Hill, and so on, maintaining the tradition of Drayton in poetic topography, singing the praises of picturesque and interesting localities. The

first truly patriotic note, after Shakespeare, was struck by Thomson, in that 'Rule, Britannia' which has survived, with wonderful freshness, the most laboriously hackneyed treatment—much, no doubt, to the surprise of the author, if he is ever permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon. The eighteenth century must have been, for the English people, an era of patriotic moments, or Thomson could never have been inspired to conceive and complete so sturdy an utterance of national feeling. This was the period in which Collins wrote his 'Ode to Liberty,' with its invitation to the typical Englishman to 'read Albion's fame in every age'; and it is to Collins, also, that we owe that impressive dirge in which praise is given to

> 'The brave who rest,
> By all their country's wishes blessed.'

The wars with France at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century naturally did much to arouse the spirit of patriotism in our poets. How these that spirit

shone in the verses of Wordsworth, Southey, Campbell, Charles Wolfe, and the like, is known to everybody. To her song-writers—to the authors of 'The Death of Nelson,' 'Hearts of Oak,' and so on—England owes much; but she owes even more to certain of Wordsworth's sonnets, to Southey's 'Ode during the negotiations with Buonaparte in 1814,' to Campbell's 'Mariners of England' and 'Battle of the Baltic,' and such-like trumpet-tones sounded boldly in the ears of the nation. And the note thus struck has been kept vibrating ever since. Campbell, in the sturdiness of his love of country, had a brilliant successor in Lord Tennyson, who, sixty years ago, or thereabouts, was writing in the most Jingo strain. Then, as in the previous generation, France was the nation's adversary, and the poet addressed his brethren in stirring phrase:

'There standeth our ancient enemy;
Hark, he shouteth, the ancient enemy;
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise;
They stream like fire in the skies;
Hold up the Lion of England on high,
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes!'

Twenty years later, there was the same incitement to patriotic effort, and Tennyson again lifted up his voice (this time anonymously) in vigorous fashion:

'We were the best of marksmen long ago,
We won old battles with our strength, the bow.
Now practise, yeomen,
Like those bowmen,
Till your balls fly as their shafts have flown.
Yeomen, guard your own.'

Since then, the Laureate has over and over again testified to the intensity of his English feeling. If we had had no other spokesman, his vivid strains would have been sufficient in themselves to keep alive in us that devotion to our native land which is one of the best endowments of the really noble spirit.

As it happily happens, Tennyson has in no sense been isolated in this matter. The humblest, as well as the greatest, of his contemporaries have emulated him in this phase of song. Eliza Cook was but a gentle poetaster; nevertheless, she wrote a few lyrics, such as 'The Englishman'—

'Tis the star of earth, deny it who can,
The island home of an Englishman—'

'The Flag of the Free,' 'The Ploughshare of Old England,' and so on, which, in their modest way, did much to create and maintain among us a strong national sentiment. Open the poetical works of Gerald Massey, and you will be struck by the enthusiasm and *entrain* with which that poet of the people celebrates and illustrates the patriotic principle. His pages overflow with praises of the mother-country—with pride in her past and faith in her future. The measures are homely, but they are generous and sincere:

'Old England still throbs with the muffled fire
Of a Past she can never forget;
And again she shall herald the world up higher;
For there's life in the Old Land yet.'

Even so unassertive and contemplative a poet as Arthur Clough could not help breaking out into a tribute to the 'green fields of England.' And the men who are writing actively to-day maintain with admirable earnestness and vigour the note which rings

through the verse of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson. It was only the other day that Mr. Lewis Morris penned an eloquent 'Song of Empire'; and we all know how of late years Mr. Swinburne has come to the front as a splendid eulogist of the land which gave him birth:

'Thou, though the world should misdoubt thee,
Be strong as the seas at thy side;
Bind on thine armour about thee
That girds thee with power and with pride.
Where Drake stood, where Blake stood,
Where fame sees Nelson stand,
Stand thou too, and now too
Take thou thy fate in hand.'

HEROES OF OPERA.

NOT very long ago M. Ambroise Thomas turned the hero of his 'Hamlet' into a tenor. Formerly his Prince of Denmark was a baritone, but, circumstances having suggested the change, it was duly made. On general principles it may be commended. If Hamlet is to flaunt in opera at all—and I am not sure that it is a very dignified position for Shakespeare's greatest creation — it seems clear that he ought to be a tenor. He is not a sufficiently robust personage to be a baritone. He does some tragic things, to be sure, and has a tragic end; but he is strong only by spasms and by accident. In essence, he is weak, flaccid, indeterminate—unmanly alike in his irresolution, his despair, his hysteria. There is a broad vein of the feminine in Hamlet's

nature, and such an individuality ought
it would seem, to express itself, musically,
the deeper accents of the human voice.

For him, rather, should be the piping no
of the tenor, and especially of the high ten
who, roughly speaking, is the male coun
part of the soprano. The sterner and acu
emotions should be reserved, operatically,
the more sonorous vocalists—for the barito
or even for the bass. It is true that Mr.
H. Cowen assigned his Claude Melnotte
Mr. Santley, and some, not unjustifiably, n
hold that Claude is a considerably less her
figure than Hamlet. Poetically and dram
ically, of course, they cannot be compar
But for operatic purposes Claude is, perha
the better hero of the two. There is in h
at least a strain of the elevated: he despi
himself for the trick he plays upon the la
he makes all the reparation in his power,
goes off to the wars, he returns with at le
a reputation for bravery, and, in a wo
asserts his manhood. Morally, he seems
have the advantage of his Danish riv

Latterly he has been presented anew in tenor guise; but when Mr. Cowen made him speak in more masculine numbers, the compliment was not unmerited.

What the ordinary operatic hero is, everybody knows from long and sometimes painful experience. He is usually a tenor, and generally a poor creature. He is not invariably despicable. There is Don Giovanni, for example — the Lovelace of the lyric stage. The Don is a naughty man, but he is a man, nevertheless, and is the central point of interest in the very finest example of the old school of operas. He has spirit, and he has daring, and audiences like him none the less because he is by no means reputable. The average tenor hero is respectable to the core, but he is rarely, if ever, spirited. He seems made to be sat upon. When he is not whining, he is drivelling. There is nothing necessarily discreditable in the expression of the affections; but why, on the stage, should it be so constantly associated with a man's upper G? It must often have been a source

of wonder to the unsophisticated that the operatic heroine should so invariably have preferred the piping tenor to the sonorous baritone. The latter is almost always, if not always, the prettier fellow of the two—the more attractive in every way. There have been fine-looking tenors, from Mario downwards, but they have not been so numerous as could be wished. Too frequently they have been short and squat, with a visible tendency to baldness. Fat and, too often, scant of breath has been the average high-pitched tenor from Italian shores. There have been tenors slight and tall, just as there have been sopranos tall and slight; but no care has been taken by managers to assort them properly. The slim tenor has warbled too frequently to the soprano of matronly proportions, and the slender soprano has had to listen to the impassioned vows of the tenor who was as broad as he was long. The baritone—that is to say, the villain of the piece—is, following some unexplainable law of nature, always lengthy; but the soprano, however

elongated, shows no sign of regarding him as her affinity. She prefers the tenor gentleman, whom she could easily put into her pocket, and whom, as it is, she exercises as much as possible up and down the stage.

One may be forgiven if, every now and then, one rebels against these conventionalities of opera. Why should the singing hero be so often a tenor, and so frequently a poor creature? Is he the former because he is the latter, or the latter because he is the former? Have the composers made their heroes tenors because they were ashamed of them, or have the said heroes been ashamed of themselves because they were tenors? The problem, probably, will never be solved. And, admittedly, the humours of the lyric drama would be regrettably curtailed if any alteration were made in the tactics of the past. The spectacle in 'La Favorita' of the portly Tietjens whirling about the tiny Aramburo is one, among many such, which lingers in the memory, and which one would not willingly let die. Yet composers, and

librettists, and managers will, if they are wise, do their best to reform this matter altogether. Ridicule kills, and the New Opera will go the way of the Old Opera if its heroes are not a little more happily selected. Let the high tenor be deposed from his pride of place, and his position taken by the baritone, or the bass, or, at least, the *tenore robusto.* Only the very young heroes should be given to the *tenori leggieri.* The weak and cowardly Faust may very properly articulate in high-set tones, but why should Siebel, the love-sick boy of the piece, be handed over to a contralto?

The truth is, of course, that composers have always thought more of the musical possibilities, the harmonic combinations, of their work, than of the fitness of the vocal register to the character. They are a selfish body, these musicians, and do not care twopence for their librettists. Still more selfish, however, are the vocalists, who care neither for librettists nor for composers. It is mainly to the vanity of the ladies that we owe what is perhaps the least tolerable of all

operatic nuisances—the feminine hero, the male character enacted by the female artist. This is the most objectionable of all the heroes of opera—an epicene personage, in whom no real interest can be felt, and who degrades the lyric drama (such as it is) to a level artistically low.

THE LYRISTS OF LOVE.

GLANCING through a recently published anthology of English amatory verse, one is struck anew not only by the beauty, but by the variety, of the treasures exhibited. Rich indeed has been the love-poetry of this country—multitudinous in moods as well as exquisite in expression. At two different epochs our poets have sung of the gentle passion in all its phases; during two other periods two distinct veins of feeling have been wrought out to special perfection; and the total result is a body of love-poems which forms a perpetual feast to those who like such delicacies.

The lyre of love, as distinguished from instruments of greater fulness and power, was first touched in this country by Sir

Thomas Wyat and the Earl of Surrey—often in somewhat obscure and turgid strains, as was the manner of the times, but now and then with an attractive simplicity and clearness. There is no mistake about Wyat's 'Forget not yet' or 'And wilt thou leave me thus?' Their sincerity is beyond all question. Nor can anyone doubt the *bona fides* of Lord Surrey, when challenging all other men to acknowledge the supremacy of his mistress. 'Give place, ye lovers, here before,' he cries; and his fine intention cannot be doubted. But it is not till we get well on into the Elizabethan era that we find the praise of Venus sounded universally and in all keys. Under the auspices of the maiden queen, Cupid reigned supreme. At his command the lyre was attuned to many melodies. Shakespeare himself sang in varied fashion—at one time with the heavily-laden passion of the sonnets, at other times with the buoyant simplicity of the songs in his dramas, with their lively refrains and happy jingle. With the lesser dramatists the tone taken was

mainly earnest and melancholy. One heard much in them of the despair and death of love, of graves, and yews, and funeral garlands, and such-like depressing things.

Other writers, happily, were more cheerful in their utterances, giving themselves up simply to the joy of loving—the mood in which Lyly sang of his Campaspe, Lodge of his Rosalynde, and the like. Others diverged into the idyllic paths, chanting like Marlowe about 'passionate shepherds,' and celebrating the charms of mock-rustic courtship. The song-books of the time, lately thrown open to the world by Mr. Bullen, revel in the freest and fullest treatment of the love-theme, using very plain diction now and then, but open and innocent withal. Probably love was never portrayed more blithely and heartily than by these minor poets, most of whom are anonymous to this hour. This was the era in which poets really sang, in the true sense of singing, and when side by side with rather plethoric sentiment went an engaging freshness never yet surpassed. So large was the

compass indulged in by the Elizabethan love-lyrists that now and then they even struck one of the chief notes of the immediately succeeding generations—such a note as that which was sounded by Sir Walter Raleigh when, greatly daring, he said of his chosen lady-love:

> 'If she undervalue me,
> What care I how fair she be?'

This, of course, was virtually in the same key as Wither's

> 'Shall I, wasting in despair,
> Die because a woman's fair?'

—the extreme phase of the feeling which dominated the love-poetry of the seventeenth century. During that century, one may say—broadly speaking—most 'lyrical lovers' took a different tone from that which rang through the amatory lays of their immediate predecessors. Under the Elizabethan rule, love-songs were mainly adoring and encomiastic, pulsing with passion and devotion. Even in Stuart times there was a store of adoration for the ladies. Ben Jonson, who helped to

connect the two periods, besought his fair, in lines which everybody knows, to drink to him only with her eyes. Crashaw imagined the charms of the 'not impossible she.' Sir Henry Wotton told the 'meaner beauties' of his day to pale their ineffectual fire before his Queen of Bohemia. Nothing, certainly, could well be more devout than the attitude of Herrick towards his Julia and Anthea, or of Waller towards his Sacharissa.

But these are among the exceptions that prove the rule. On the whole, the seventeenth-century lover was of a manlier type than the lover of the sixteenth. The love-lyrist of those days was usually on the Cavalier's side, and his heart was divided between his mistress and his sword.

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.'

This sentiment was not only Lovelace's; it was that of many a gallant of those times; of Montrose, for example, who addressed his inamorata in terms which his ancestors

would hardly have dared to employ to their sweethearts. And one notes much the same spirit in the verse of Sedley, Suckling, Etherege, Davenant, Carew, Brome, Dryden, and the rest. These were no mere 'amorists' of the Elizabethan cast. They stood somewhat on their dignity, and did not bend so low as their fathers. Moreover, they were much less in earnest and much more cynical. 'Love, lodged in a woman's breast, is but a guest,' said Wotton.

> 'Out upon it, I have loved
> Three whole days together,'

cried Suckling, surprised at his unwonted constancy.

> 'It is not, Celia, in your power
> To say how long our love will last,'

says Etherege. One sees at once what a change has come over the spirit of the love-dream. The lovers, for the most part, are keeping their heads and declining to surrender at discretion.

By-and-by we find the love-poets going

from bad to worse. To indifference, real or assumed, succeeds artificiality of phrase or tone. Through the affectations of Donne and Cowley, we are led to the levity of Prior and Congreve, the primness of men like Thomson, Shenstone, and Lyttleton. We live now in a world of Chloes and Amorets, of Delias and Fulvias. The lyrists, at any rate, have become insincere; they are not writing from their heart. 'Euphelia serves to grace my measure,' says Prior, 'But Chloe is my real flame.' Congreve celebrates the going astray of 'fair Amoret.' Thomson asks the gods to make but the 'dear Amanda' his. 'Yes,' cries Shenstone, 'Fulvia is like Venus fair,' and Lyttelton recalls the time 'when Delia on the plain appears.' How pleased one is to get out of this atmosphere of modishness into the free air of 'Sally in our Alley'! How still more delightedly one finds oneself in the society of Burns, with Mary Morrison and Highland Mary, inhabiting a poetic climate in which the passion is real, the expression earnest!

From this point onward all is well. The example set by Burns is followed worthily by the great group of poets who make splendid the first years of this century. Never was the lyre of love handled with more sincerity of feeling than by Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, and, in his own modest placid way, by Wordsworth. The strains of Campbell, Moore, Scott, Landor, bring us down to those of Hood and Beddoes, Mrs. Browning and Miss Procter, Robert Browning and Rossetti, William Allingham, and Matthew Arnold. Among living lyrists, love has been most charmingly treated by (of course) Tennyson and Swinburne, Meredith, Patmore, William Morris, Massey, MacDonald, Aubrey De Vere, Mrs. Webster, and, in its lighter phases, by Frederick Locker and Austin Dobson. Here in the nineteenth century our poets have emulated the splendid variety of the sixteenth. The feverish notes of Swinburne and Rossetti have blended with the delicate accents of the Laureate and Mr. Patmore. Our lady lyrists have been somewhat monotonously mournful,

but it has been possible to mitigate them by the manly tones of Browning or Massey. Much, of course, of the love-verse of this era has been literary in origin and method; but the passion—or sentiment, as the case may be—has never been interpreted with more fulness or more finish than in these 'degenerate' times.

THE STAGE RUSTIC.

IN a little one-act play, recently performed in London, yet another attempt was made by a present-day dramatist to bring the scent of the hay over the footlights. It was a drama of the good old kind. The central figure was an aged rustic, who had been saving up certain moneys for his pretty ward, and was reduced to a state of doddering imbecility by the suspicion, instilled into his mind by the girl's non-favoured lover, that his cherished grandson was a thief, with special designs upon the young lady's *dot*.

It was in accordance with the fitness of things that this country worthy should be aged and should 'dodder.' This is the badge of most, if not of all, of the tribe. The favourite stage rustic of to-day is always

old and feeble. He is preternaturally the one and abnormally the other. He is obviously a centenarian—there is every sign of it about him. Even if he has a daughter who looks about eighteen, he himself still looks a hundred and more. His hair pervades his head in wisps, his cheeks and brow are furrowed like the arable land, his back is bent, his head shakes persistently, his legs give way under him, and his fingers are for ever twitching. His voice, apparently, is a falsetto, though it is apt to relapse on occasion into a sonorous bass. He usually comes off and on as the playwright requires him—generally as 'comic relief,' sometimes as the repository of a local secret, now and then simply to give the protagonists in the play the necessary information. As a rule, he is the father of a youth or maid who comes unintentionally to grief; and then, by way of variety, he will go mad and become more doddery than ever.

It must be confessed that this variety of the stage rustic is a nuisance. One gets tired

of him. Why should he be always ancient, always drivelly? Does everybody in the country live to be a Methuselah and to lose at once all his teeth and all his wits? The stage rustic is sometimes young, and then invariably foolish. If masculine, he falls in love with a fine lady from town; if feminine, the affection is bestowed upon a fine gentleman from the same locality. Neither the youth nor the maiden has any idea of falling in love the one with the other, or with suitable persons in their own class of life. The playwright declines to place them in that natural position, except when he wants the male rustic to revenge himself upon the gentlemanly villain. Then the male rustic is portrayed as enamoured of the maid whom the gentlemanly villain has corrupted. Such are the ingenuous ways of the 'dramatists,' for whom the youthful male rustic is always clean and virtuous, and the youthful female rustic always clean but flighty. Sometimes the former is fascinated by the dame from town, sometimes he resists her blandishments

with indignation. Sometimes, again, the village beauty succumbs at once to the urban libertine's charms; at others she repels them, and has to be carried off by force.

Going still lower in the social scale, we find the country yokel invariably slouching and unintelligent, pulling his top-knot and cultivating the vice of idleness. This has always been so from the days when Bickerstaff christened Hodge 'a bumpkin,' and when Carey called a country squire's servant 'Blunder.' In those days the country squire himself would be named 'Sapskull,' and 'Sullen' would be the designation given to 'a country blockhead.' There were, however, other types of 'lords of the manor,' as represented in the benevolent Sir Hubert Stanley and the like. In general, it may be said, the old squire of the stage is moral and generous, the young squire immoral and sordid. The old squire is for ever being ruined by his son's extravagance, or something of the kind; and the young squire is for ever coming home, like the prodigal son,

to repent of his folly, and be taken once more to his father's heart. One occasionally wonders how the supply of good old squires came to be kept up, seeing that they all began life so badly. Evidently they repented at the proper time, and ended their days in the odour of propriety and respectability. But if they had been such sad dogs in their youth, why were they always so particularly hard upon their erring flesh and blood? The playwrights of the past knew nothing of 'heredity,' and found nothing impossible in a succession of good old squires and of bad young heirs to their possessions.

The attire of the stage rustic is unalterable. Among the lower orders there is the indispensable smock-frock as well as the indispensable gaiters. Great is the consumption of gaiters upon the melodramatic stage. The old dodderer has them, and so has the young; so has the benevolent squire; so has his rascally son; so has the supposedly well-to-do (but about-to-be-bankrupt) farmer; so has

the gamekeeper, very honest, or very much the reverse, without whom no good rustic play could be concocted. The farmer will wear broadcloth, the gamekeeper will sport corduroy; the old squire has a fondness for turning up in scarlet and with a supply of 'Yoicks! Tally-ho!' while the young one develops a *penchant* for velveteen coat and waistcoat. The wardrobe of the rural drama is, it will be seen, very simple. It has not many varieties, and it is delightfully cheap; for the same articles can be made to spread over a large period of years, which is good for the actors. No parts are so easily dressed as those of the rustic school. Even the poacher, who has always so lurid a *rôle* to play, and who usually turns out to be the father of the unexceptionable heroine, is well off in this respect. He cannot be too shabbily garbed, and he can always be garbed in the same way. The village innkeeper's get-up consists mainly of a pipe and an apron: the innkeeper's fussy wife is generally all apron.

How is it that the rusticity of the stage is so absolutely unlike the real thing? One reason lies in the fact that the playwrights have so often, if not usually, been ignorant of country ways and people—an ignorance very frequently shared, or even exceeded, in the case of their interpreters. The elder dramatists and players created certain types, and their successors imitated those types, getting farther and farther from the originals as years went on. At the same time, it must be remembered that both the authors and the performers of plays have been hampered, in this as in other things, by the inherent difficulty of their callings. So long as melodramas are written, they must have the defects of their qualities. When a playwright essays the portrayal of a long list of characters in the course of three hours or so, he cannot spend much time upon the development of his *personæ*. He is tempted, consequently, to take familiar types and reproduce them over and over again. The stage rustic, whatever his grade, has become

a well-known figure. Always recognisable as soon as seen, he tells his own story, and, in so doing, saves dramatist, actor, and audience alike a world of trouble.

THE LAST MAN.

THE publication of the 'Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley' served, among other things, to remind many that the oft-mentioned 'Frankenstein' (whose name is so often taken in vain, because incorrectly) was not Mrs. Shelley's only notable contribution to prose fiction. She wrote, indeed, five stories altogether, but the only one worthy to be named in the same breath with 'Frankenstein' was that entitled 'The Last Man.' Of this, the central idea was scarcely less original than that of its predecessor, though, unfortunately, it was not so well worked out. As a recompense for that demerit, we have the fact that, in 'The Last Man,' Mrs. Shelley anticipated all the fantastic romances which, since her time, have

had for subject the possible state of society in England in a period subsequent to that in which the writers lived. She was the first to paint a picture of what this country might become, socially and politically, in the dim and distant future.

The 'last man,' as imagined by Mrs. Shelley, was named Verney, and born in England in the year 2063 A.D.—that is to say, just 172 years from now. When he was ten years old a very serious change took place in the body politic. The reigning monarch then abdicated, 'in compliance with the gentle force of the remonstrances of his subjects.' His case was somewhat like that of the ex-Emperor of the Brazils, inasmuch as, though extruded, he was liberally provided for. A republic was instituted, but it was generous. It gave him the title of Earl of Windsor, and presented him with large estates, including Windsor Castle and its demesnes. Mrs. Shelley is not too precise or copious in her language, but we gather that the two Houses of Parliament were, under the republic, rolled

into one, and that upon them was laid the onus of electing, from time to time, a Lord Protector. There appears to have been no limit to the number of candidates for that post, but

> 'on the last day two candidates only were allowed to remain, and, to obviate if possible the last struggle between these, a bribe was offered to him who should voluntarily resign his pretension; a place of great emolument and honour was given him, and his success facilitated in a future election.'

This was a shrewd arrangement; but in general the habits and manners of England in the twenty-first century, as described or indicated by Mrs. Shelley, are not very much in advance of those of to-day. The English, it is true, travel by balloon. The 'last man,' bound from Windsor to Dunkeld, intimates his intention of doing the distance 'by air,' and his conviction that he will do it in forty-eight hours. Mrs. Shelley, it will be observed, did not foresee the Scotch express of 1891. And, indeed, according to her prophecy, there was much still to be done even in the twenty-first century:—

'The state of poverty was to be abolished; men were to be transported from place to place almost with the same facility as the Princes in "The Arabian Nights." Disease was to be banished, labour lightened of its heaviest burdens.'

The Lord Protector of 2080, or thereabouts, had plans 'for the better education of the poor;' and, altogether, Mrs. Shelley's imagination, in these respects, was not particularly vivid: it has since been outrun by the progress of scientific discovery.

One thing is clear. The world, as imagined by this clever lady about sixty years ago, was not to go quickly or far in the direction of sanitation. It was to become an easy prey to the influence of the plague-demon. Somewhere about 2090 the ex-Lord Protector of England puts himself at the head of the Greeks who are fighting against the domination of the Mohamedan. Just at this time the pestilence begins to 'raise its serpent head on the shores of the Nile. Parts of Asia are infected; it is in Constantinople.' And the consequence is that, though the Greeks are led to the very gates of the Turkish capital, they will not

pass through them. The city is destroyed and rebuilt, but the plague reappears. It spreads through Thrace and Macedonia, devastating as it goes. It is heard of, not only in Athens, but in Persia and in China, in America, almost throughout the world. Immigrants from all parts flock into England, which very speedily is separated from the plague only by France, Germany, Spain, and Italy. All trade with other countries has been effectually stopped; our merchants are bankrupts, whole families beggared. No help can come from the Colonies, for the death-dealing pestilence is there also.

At last it makes its appearance in France, and then the English are genuinely alarmed. Their brethren are flocking home from abroad, and, with them, more immigrants. The country is 'filled even to bursting.' The rich are very good to the poor, and things are beginning to look rosier, when it is whispered that cases of suffering from the plague have been seen in the London hospitals. The fatal epidemic, when once it has a footing,

extends its ravages. In London, life is paralysed. 'Grass had sprung high in the streets; the houses had a desolate look; most of the shutters were closed; and,' says the 'last man,' who tells his own story, 'there was a ghast (*sic*) and frightened air in the persons I met, very different from the usual business-like demeanour of the Londoners.' The Metropolis is besieged by an army of reckless Americans, Irish, and Scotch, who happily, are won over by the Lord Protector. In time, however, only 1,000 people are left in the capital; and it occurs to them to leave their stricken fatherland, and to see whether, across the Channel, there might not be a fairer prospect for them.

It is about this period that the 'last man' begins specially to interest us. He is wedded to the sister of Adrian, the Protector, and has two children. But before he can leave England his wife and one of the children die, and he sets out for the Continent with his son Evelyn and his niece Clara. The fugitives, led by Adrian, come to Paris,

to find it a desert; they press on to Switzerland, and there, 'in the rocky vale of Chamounix,' the 'barbarous tyranny' of the plague wears itself out. Alas! the little band of English people has lessened gradually on the road; and Verney, Adrian, Evelyn, and Clara, are, apparently—so far as they know—the last of human kind. The boy Evelyn is carried off by fever, and in a storm in the Mediterranean Adrian and Clara are drowned. Verney escapes destruction, and Mrs. Shelley supplies a powerful picture of his desolation. At first he hopes that Adrian and Clara may have been washed safe ashore, but, after a while, is obliged to surrender the idea. Nevertheless, he says, 'I did not yet feel in every pulsation, in every nerve, in every thought, that I remained alone of my race, that I was the Last Man.' He still trusted that somewhere or other there were other living specimens of humanity.

Gradually that feeling began to desert him. He bethought him of the story of Crusoe and his island. But—

'"he," cries Verney, "was far happier than I, for he could hope, nor hope in vain—the destined vessel at last arrived to bear him to countrymen and kindred. To none could I ever relate the story of my adversity: no hope had I."'

For days he wanders about Ravenna, in hope of coming across a living man. Then he sets out to explore the towns and villages on his way to Rome. He is unkempt and ragged, but finds clothes, and attires himself with care, in case he should meet a survivor like himself. He posts up in conspicuous places the legend:—'Verney, the last of the race of Englishmen, has taken up his abode in Rome. Friend! come. I wait for thee!' Arrived at Rome, he seeks to distract his mind by shooting, studying pictures, and the like. But he cannot rest—the desire for companionship, the sense of isolation, are too strong to be resisted. He declares that, grand and varied as are the many attractions of Rome, the sight of one of his own kind would be 'worth all the glory and remembered power of this time-honoured city.'

The thought of suicide comes, but is dis-

missed. It is ignoble. Might not the world be re-peopled? In view of the possibility, he will write his memoirs for the information of posterity. Meanwhile, he ascends St. Peter's and carves on its topmost stone 'the æra 2100, last year of the world!' Then he determines to sail round and round the globe, in case there might somewhere be a man like himself who would be made happy by seeing him. He launches a boat upon the Mediterranean, and so begins what may be his last voyage.

'Thus around the shores of deserted earth, while the sun is high, and the moon waxes or wanes, angels, the spirits of the dead, and the ever-open eye of the Supreme will behold the tiny bark, freighted with Verney—the Last Man.'

It will be seen that Mrs. Shelley's conception is not so absolute, so final, as that of the poet Campbell, whose 'last man' was really 'the last of human mould,' around whom lay 'the skeletons of nations,' and who is left watching the disappearance of the dying sun in the surrounding gloom.

ALBUMS.

DOES the old-fashioned album still exist among us? The casket of varied size and hue which enshrines the photographs of friends or of celebrities is, alas! rampant in our midst; but the volume of many-coloured leaves, graciously bedecked outside, and including the offspring both of pen and of pencil—the instrument of torture which, once upon a time, was placed before the innocent and unwary guest by the enterprising 'daughter of the house'—does it still linger in suburban drawing-rooms or provincial parlours, as much prized as ever, and as fatal as ever to the peace of mind of the belated visitor?

If it has departed, with other features of past fashions, it has not long been gone. One finds more than one set of album verses

among the poems of Lowell and of Wendell Holmes. Eliza Cook, who was so lately with us, once penned some stanzas in the album of 'Alfred Crowquill,' and no doubt perpetrated many others in her day. Of Thackeray's rhythmic work one of the best-known specimens is 'The Pen and the Album,' which opens thus:

'"I am Miss Catherine's Book," the Album speaks;
"I've lain among your tomes these many weeks;
I'm tired of their old coats and yellow cheeks.

'"Quick, Pen! and write a line with a good grace;
Come! draw me off a funny little face;
And, prithee, send me back to Chesham Place."'

In Thackeray's time, the album was in process of decay. It had been at its proudest and best in the previous generation—the generation of Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Campbell, Leigh Hunt, Moore, and so on—when literature was not so widely spread as it is now, and when the amateur collector of manuscript verse and pencil drawing had but few rivals in the way of 'annual' and magazine.

From the works of such writers as I have named, one gains a very clear idea of the form which the album of those days usually took. Leigh Hunt, in some lines written in the table-book of Rotha Quillinan, tells us that

> 'Albums are records kept by gentle dames,
> To show us that their friends can write their names;
> That Miss can draw, or brother John can write
> Sweet lines,'

to which are added 'Fanny's "sweet airs" and Jenny's "sweet designs."' The kindly bard, however, is careful not to be too hard upon the 'fad,' and says, therefore, that 'Albums are, after all, pleasant inventions, Nay, now and then produce right curious books.' Charles Lamb, in the stanzas composed for Lucy Barton's album, shows how miscellaneous were the literary contents of such productions. 'Sayings fetched from sages old' jostled 'lighter fancies.' 'Laws which Holy Writ unfold' came cheek by jowl with 'blameless wit.' All Lamb bargained for was that there should be no 'gilded mar-

gins,' no 'disproportioned scrawl' or 'ugly blot.' Elsewhere he spoke of an album as 'a garden, not for show planted, but for use; where wholesome herbs should grow.' Hartley Coleridge said that a thought 'showed neatest,' to his mind, 'in well-bound Album writ by maiden kind.' Moore, in some verses to a 'Mrs. Bl—h—d,' described how Love once had a book

> 'Where all who came the pencil took,
> And wrote, like us, a line or two.'

Innocence kept the volume bright and fair; Hope made the magic pencil run; Fear closed what Hope began; Grief dropped a tear or two, and then came Pleasure to spoil everything. Albums, perhaps, had never been so prettily described—not even by Mrs. Hemans, who wrote about a friend's, as destined to be fraught

> 'With many a sweet and playful line,
> With many a pure and pious thought.'

There can be no question that, though albums have, in the course of their career, given house-room to a pile of rubbish, they

have also afforded shelter to a good many literary gems. The poetry of the first half of this century was largely represented in their pages. The most distinguished authors did not disdain to contribute to the pretty treasuries of their youthful friends. Even Wordsworth is found among the bards who were willing to unbend in this graceful fashion. His 'Lines written in the Album of the Countess of Lonsdale, 1834,' form quite an important poem: while the quatrain which he inserted in the album of Miss Quillinan 'highly-favoured child' is a poetic jewel of great price:

'Small service is true service while it lasts:
Of humblest Friends, bright Creature! scorn not one:
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dewdrop from the Sun.

Lamb's album verses were so numerous that they suggested the title of one of his serious publications. Among them are those entitled 'In My Own Album,' in which he compares his soul, as it originally was, to "a spotless leaf," on which thought and care soon [illegible]

and foe, have since written 'strange defeatures.' Sometimes the invitation to figure in a lady's album has been provocative of wit as well as wisdom, of pungency as well as pathos. Thus, when, on one occasion, Thomas Campbell was asked to write 'something original' in a volume of the kind, he responded in very happy style:

'An original something, fair maid, you would win me
To write—but how shall I begin?
For I fear I have nothing original in me—
Excepting Original Sin.'

On the whole, one is inclined to feel sorry that the old-fashioned album—the *mélange* of sketch and portrait, sentiment and satire—has, apparently, disappeared. Can it not be resuscitated? Poets and draughtsmen of eminence might not often condescend to it, for they have too ready a public market for their wares; but the power of wielding the pen and the pencil is now so widely spread that young ladies would have no lack of contributors to their store. And, indeed, the private album might do a public service,

perhaps, by intercepting and burying many of the effusions which otherwise might be sent to, and published in, the magazines. At worst, such compilations are quite harmless, for no one need stoop to them unless he pleases; while, at their best, they may be the means of preserving many a little product of the mind, which in the present may give pleasure, and in the future may serve to recall more than one pleasant incident of the past.

AUTHORS AT TABLE.

THE members of the Society of Authors dine together annually, and their enterprise, no doubt, is thereby all the more firmly based. We have here yet another evidence of our national progress in civilization. Authors have not always met thus at dinner. At one time their meeting-place was the tavern; and even now the traditions of the 'Mermaid' (celebrated by Ben Jonson and by Keats) are not wholly forgotten. By-and-by, as the craft became more and more 'respectable,' the coffee-house took the place of the public-house, and literary potations were comparatively mild. Still later, when the career of letters had grown to be even more reputable, it was the fashion to foregather at elaborate breakfasts, and there indulge in the feast of

reason and the flow of soul. Now the devotees of pen and ink ask each other to, and congregate at, the dinner-table—the apotheosis of propriety and (sometimes) of actual good fellowship.

At least the dinner is a good one—which was not always the case in the old times. We do not now cultivate literature on a little oatmeal; we do not now scorn delights, however laborious may be our days. Our more or less representative authors sit down to a repast worthy of Gunter; even the lady writers, it is said, wind up their private meal with liqueurs and cigarettes. And that reminds one of the place of Minerva at the literary board. Leigh Hunt showed a truly prophetic spirit when he brought the feminine contingent to the Feasts of the Poets. But while his tone towards them was one of condescension and some little banter, the lady writer of to-day will not be patronized. She sits by the side of her brethren, and claims equality. There were only a few female guests, if I remember rightly, at Mr. Robert

Buchanan's 'Session of the Poets.' At any rate, Miss Ingelow only was mentioned by name, though one gathers that other poetic 'misses' were of the party. Had Mr. Buchanan to write the *jeu d'esprit* over again, he would perhaps go farther than this, and portray the male geniuses as tamed, if charmed, by the presence of their literary sisters.

Manners, in truth, have improved. Of that there can be no doubt. There are now no Dr. Samuel Johnsons to horrify us at table by the speed at which they eat and the indifference they show as to their surroundings. The famous description of the great lexicographer at feeding-time is perhaps the most unpleasant in the whole range of literary biography. Partly, no doubt, the haste was due to nervousness; partly to the desire to repair as speedily as possible the nervous exhaustion brought on by extra mental labour. For a taste for repletion is not a necessary concomitant of the literary character. Against the typical instance of John-

son, one may well put the not less typical instances of Byron and Shelley: Byron, who hated, the legend says, to see a lady eat; and Shelley, who was temperance itself in the matter of aliment. 'His usual food,' says the chronicler, 'was bread, sometimes seasoned with a few raisins; his beverage was generally water; if he drank tea or coffee he would take no sugar with it'—and so on. There exist, of course, jocose stories, which tend to show that authors like to be well fed. There is that one about W. L. Bowles, cleric and sonnetteer, who, 'dining' with a friend at his chambers, got tired of the slender supply of chops, and boldly asseverated that he wanted something to eat. But the literary tendency nowadays is towards dinners which are good in the sense of being refined as well as ample. The old gluttonous days are gone. Our modern poets are *gourmets*, not *gourmands*, and sing the merits of the *chefs* more than those of the meats.

So far, so good; but if the author's palate

is more delicate than in the past, is his wit as keen and his humour as lambent?—does he shine in impromptu and repartee as he shines in the criticism of *menus?* Though one is sceptical, sometimes, as to the amount of brilliancy displayed at bygone literary symposia, one cannot deny that some intellectual 'good things,' inspired by those of the table, have come down to us, suggesting that there were occasions on which our fathers and grandfathers, when dining, were genuinely amusing. It was at dinner that Hood invented the rhyming couplet, into which he condensed satirically the declarations of a bumptious sportsman:

> 'What he hit is history,
> What he missed is mystery.'

It was at dinner, too, that Jerdan, hearing it said of a deceased Irish earl that he would 'leave no wake upon the stream of time,' cried, 'Nonsense! every dead Irishman has a wake.' It was while dining that someone said to W. H. Harrison, 'I see you stick to port;' to which Harrison replied, 'Yes, and

so am safe from being half-seas over.' Once more, it was at dinner that Thackeray, after partaking of a particularly large oyster, said that he felt for all the world as if he had swallowed a baby. Then there have even been such things as impromptu compositions at the table. It was under such circumstances that James Smith wrote the following quatrain, in reply to the inquiry whether he was going to a ball which was to be given in aid of Polish refugees:

'Aloft, in rotatory motions hurled,
The Poles are called on to support the World;
In these our days a different law controls,
The World is called on to support the Poles.'

Often there is as much charm in a diverting quotation as in an original witticism, and no doubt there was much laughter when these absurd lines (by Samuel Rogers) were first recited at a dinner at which Tom Moore was present:

'When I'm drinking my tea
I think of my *The;*
When I'm drinking my coffee
I think of my *offee;*
So, whether I'm drinking my tea or my coffee,
I'm always a-thinking of thee, my Theoffy.'

Yes, authors have in the past been innocently funny at table; and possibly, among choice spirits, and in strict privacy, they are so still on occasion. Yet this is at least doubtful. Everybody nowadays writes; and the man who drops a happy thought or expression is apt to find it next day incorporated in a brother penman's article. That tends to create distrust, not to mention a stronger feeling; and, moreover, there is this further inducement to keep silence: Everybody publishes his reminiscences, and who shall say that your choice anecdote will not be treasured up by your next door neighbour, or *vis-à-vis*, and given to the world in a new and mangled form before you can claim it and secure it for your own? On the whole, there is some excuse for an author's absorption in the discussion of his meal. His reticence is but the guard he keeps over his stock-in-trade.

IN SEARCH OF A FATHER.

THE death of the author of 'There is a Happy Land' reminded us that for long the hymn in question had been highly popular, without having ever had a definite paternity assigned to it. For a certain period, in fact, it went about, like Japhet, in search of a father. The parent existed, but was not readily to be found. As we see, however, the waifs and strays of poesy are sometimes lucky enough to discover their progenitor. For instance: in early editions of the 'Lyra Elegantiarum' Mr. Locker described the old song, 'There is a garden in her face,' as anonymous; whereas in the latest issue of the 'Lyra' he recognises that the lyric was the work of Richard Allison. In the same way, the

well-known epigram on the white and red roses, as emblems of the houses of York and Lancaster, was formerly said by Mr. Locker to be of 'unknown' authorship, whereas we now know that it was written partly by William Somerville, of 'Chase' celebrity, and partly by Congreve.

That a large proportion of the literary products of the world should be fatherless or motherless is not, indeed, wonderful. There are certain forms of mental outcome which, from the very nature of things, must be anonymous. There is, for example, the whole *corpus* of proverbial sayings, as differentiated from the imitative work of men like Benjamin Franklin and 'Josh Billings.' The proverb is, of necessity, the result of 'the wisdom of many and the wit of one'—the man who gave the finishing touch to the sentence being lost in the mist of the ages. Someone must have given the thing finality, but who shall drag his identity out of the obscurity of the past? It is gone, as old Eccles says, 'most like, for ever.' We some-

times get near to the origin of a famous dictum, and yet find it eluding our grasp in the end. We know that it was a 'very wise' acquaintance of Fletcher of Saltoun who perpetrated that irrepressible remark about a nation's ballads, but who the very wise man was we shall probably never be told. He has departed, with Hans Breitmann's party, into the *Ewigkeit*, followed, alas! by the execrations of the bored.

Talking about ballads, we have there, too, a class of poetic work of which, so far as the older and more genuine variety is concerned, it is not to be expected that we should detect the personal origin. Our poets have turned out quantities of imitations, many of them excellent in their way. We all know how admirable are Mr. Swinburne's imaginative revivals of the Northumbrian verse-narratives. But the 'right-down regular' old ballad remains, in every case, without a duly registered father. We are ignorant of the author of its being, for the simple reason that it probably had many. The lays of the

Nut-brown Maid, of Robin Goodfellow, of Robin Hood (there was, of course, a whole cycle of these), of Patient Grissell, of the Child of Elle, and, in later days, of the Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green, and Sir John Barleycorn — who will ever penetrate the mystery of their birth? Those who first sang 'O waly waly up the bank,' and 'I wish I were where Helen lies,' were masters of the lyre; but their names are unrecorded, and are dead for ever.

The earliest English song that has come down to us, 'Summer is i-cumen in,' has, up to the present, no acknowledged parent, and a large majority of the ditties of the Elizabethan age are in the same predicament. Glance at the 'collections' of the time, and you will note that few verses have the author's name attached to them: 'Ignoto' takes its place. This was partly because the writers were indifferent in the matter; partly because the editors were not too particular about copyright. Certain it is that many of the loveliest lyrics in the language, unearthed

formerly by such delvers as Mr. Palgrave and Mr. Locker, and, more recently, by Mr. Bullen and others, are still unclaimed. It has always been so. Who was it that wrote the song of Kitty of Coleraine? Who penned the familiar description of a country wedding, with the refrain of 'Derry down, down, down, Derry down'? Sometimes we know the surname of a singer and nothing more. It was one Collins who produced 'In the Down-hill of Life when I find I'm declining,' but that is all we can glean about him. The writers for the people have too often hidden themselves among them, thinking it fame enough merely to hear their songs sung.

Least lucky, perhaps, of all authors are those who act as laureates of the church and the nursery. How few of those who delight most in hymnody either know or care to whom they owe the strains which they enjoy? In this case, the public has usually only to inquire, and the answer will be ready. Hymn-books rarely contain the names of the writers

of the words, but those writers can be identified without much trouble. It is different with the snatches of doggerel with which the ears of the infant are saluted—doggerel to which the child clings with tenacity long after it has merged into the man or woman. How many of the best-informed are aware that one of the Misses Taylor was the inspired inventor of 'Twinkle twinkle, little star,' or that an American lady named Tyler was the person of genius who evolved 'Mary had a little lamb' out of her inner consciousness? Ungrateful that we are, we have doomed to neglect our very earliest benefactors. 'I love little pussy, her coat is so warm,' 'Girls and boys, come out to play,' and 'Little Bopeep, she lost her sheep,' all figure in the children's poetry books, but only as the productions of 'Anon.' They are still in search of their fathers.

Much of the literary orphanism of our own era is due to the system of anonymous journalism. The newspapers and miscel-

lanies of the century are crammed full of *jeux d'esprit* of which, in all likelihood, only a small percentage will be attributed to its rightful begetters. Thackeray, Shirley Brooks, and others have reprinted certain of their *Punch* effusions; just as Mr. Gilbert rescued many of his from the pages of *Fun*. But even when we have allowed for all this, and more, there is yet a considerable amount of wit and humour, absolutely deserted and ignored, which might give its concocters fame and popularity if properly ascribed to them. Look at the enormous measure of comicality bestowed every year upon the journals of America, without any attempt being made to assign it to its producers. The world knows nothing of its liveliest spirits. Who was it that excogitated this only 'true and original' version of a nursery epic above-mentioned?—

'Mary had a little lamb,
Whose fleece was white as snow,
And every place that Mary went,
The lamb it would *not* go.

'So Mary took that little lamb,
And beat it for a spell;
The family had it fried next day,
And it went very well.'

It is sad that a pathetic effort of this sort should wander through the world without parent or guardian.

AFTER-DINNER PLAYS.

SUBURBAN playgoers are apt to make complaint concerning the hours at which the performances at London theatres begin and terminate. These performances, it is held, are given in the interest, mainly, of the late diners—the occupants, for the most part, of the stalls and boxes and dress-circle—and to the detriment and annoyance of the less well-to-do patrons of the theatre who occupy the cheaper parts of the house. The latter class, no doubt, are largely composed of dwellers in the outskirts of the Metropolis, for whom it is of some importance that they shall get home at a reasonable hour. The complainants, therefore, would have representations begin at half-past seven instead of eight or nine, and they would have them conclude in time to allow,

say, the playgoer of Putney to 'turn in' before the sound of chimes at midnight.

Perhaps it might be well if particular playhouses would cater especially for the early diner. There are no doubt certain classes of performance which go exceedingly well with a preliminary tea, and for these a few theatres might be set apart. The earnest playgoer, who might be expected to attend those theatres, is assuredly well worth catering for. He may not be exactly a noun of multitude, but he is altogether a praiseworthy person. But for him, no one can say what might not happen to the theatre. It might become fearfully degraded, wholly devoid of serious uses, entirely given up to irresponsible frivolity. Without his assistance, Art (with a capital A) would very probably languish. No one else, certainly, would write and talk so much about it. It is the earnest playgoer who pens those stirring appeals which thrill the readers of the magazines, and those profound disquisitions which send to sleep the subscribers to the big reviews. It is he who

is for ever standing up for the dignity of the actor's and the dramatist's callings, and protesting that they are among the influences which 'make for' culture and all sorts of things. It is he who waits for hours at pit and gallery doors in order to secure a favourable position, is indignant with the haughty aristocracy which arrives late, and sternly represses not only the timid hiss but the too uproarious cheer. The earnest playgoer is, indeed, the salt of his kind, and deserves all the recognition we can give him. Let him by all means have some theatres all to himself.

But he should remember that everybody does not take 'the drama' quite so seriously as he does. Everybody is not constantly thinking about Art. There are many, not to speak it profanely, who do not care a rap about it. There are still more who have not the remotest idea what it is. Of course one must deplore the fact. It is painful to find actors and dramatists magnifying their office, and critics and cognoscenti aiding and abet-

ting them, and all the while the great bulk of the public thinking of something else. This is a distressing spectacle; but its existence must be acknowledged. We have to face the humiliating fact that most of those who go to the play simply go there for diversion. They have no notion that it is a sort of solemnity. On the contrary, they wish to enjoy themselves. They expect to be titillated—not necessarily to be made laugh, but to be pleased in some way. Sometimes the attraction is an actor, or an actress, or a company of actors, or a play; but the motive power in all instances is a desire to be interested, and to spend the evening agreeably. Nor is this the case only with the objectionably well-to-do people who can afford ten shillings for a stall. It is to be feared that in every part of a theatre the majority has come, not from a sense of the seriousness of the event, but from a consciousness that it would like a little recreation. To the earnest playgoer this may appear shocking flippancy; but if it is so, it cannot be helped. The fact remains

that there are many who regard the play by way of dessert to the more solid performances of the day.

Now, it may seem impolite to the stage and its professors to treat their work as tending mainly to the promotion of digestion. But is this really impoliteness? Is not the office very honourable and useful? Every now and then, of course, a play may stir the emotions or the sympathies for some specially good end, and then, to be sure, it achieves a notable result. This has been done in the past, and may be done again. But it is not of constant occurrence, nor need it be so. A play does well if it simply recreates and entertains. A dramatist may plume himself upon impressing the world, but he deserves well of it if he only amuses it. The work of the moral reformer is the more showy, but that of the jester is not the less acceptable in its way. It is quite unpardonable to minimize the importance of lightening and brightening the after-dinner hour:—

'When dinner has opprest one,
Methinks it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.'

How desirable, then, is it that that hour should not be dreary—that it should be made lively, even, by the efforts of the comedian! No one can say how much the playwright and the player may not unconsciously have done towards maintaining the general peace of society. They say that a fit of indigestion lost, for Napoleon, the battle of Leipsic. How much irritation of mind, and all its attendant evils, may not have been avoided by judicious indulgence in after-dinner plays! Many and many a time a rollicking farce may have saved the Empire, while a burlesque all destitute of plot may have prevented domestic revolutions.

Not that it matters very much what is the particular class of play thus utilized. A writer on theatrical subjects has told us that the cup-and-saucer comedy is dead, and that burlesque and opera-bouffe have at least one leg, if not two legs, in the grave. Farce,

musical extravaganza, and melodrama—these, it seems, are in the ascendant. Well, good farce—fresh, ingenious, full of movement and of wit, and, all the while, decorous—is something for which there is reason to be thankful; let us rejoice that we possess so much of it. Musical extravaganza—the combination of graceful melody and refined humour—is perhaps the most delightful of all entertainments; and of that, too, we luckily have a good supply. As for melodrama, that also is well suited to the after-dinner hours, if it be husbanded with modesty. It is possible for the well-regulated mind to enjoy even hair-breadth 'scapes and what not, so that they be not overdone—so that one be not startled on the one hand, or, on the other hand, depressed. That is all that is necessary. We must not be bored or disturbed. We must not be oppressed or excited. Both things are bad for the digestion, and neither of them ought to be characteristic of the genuine after-dinner play.

A POET'S TEACHING.

THE fact that the complete poetical works of Matthew Arnold are now published in one volume, and at a moderate price, is of considerable interest and significance. It indicates that the author of 'Thyrsis' has at last the chance of becoming a popular poet. To persons of education his poems have long been familiar; for many people of culture they have become almost a religion, or at any rate a formulary embodying their most intimate feelings and convictions. But to the great reading public as a whole they have yet to be introduced *en bloc*. A few passages and lyrics have filtered through the newspapers and magazines, but with the main portions of Arnold's poetic outcome most English men and women have yet to be made acquainted.

It will be curious to notice, as the days go by, the reception given to this body of verse, and the influence that it exerts. There can be little doubt that its effects will be wide and deep, and wider and deeper as culture grows and spreads. There are things in Arnold's poetry which must needs attract and enchain all persons of susceptibility — the limpid clearness, to begin with; the chasteness of expression and of form; the constant felicity of phrase; the engaging frankness, tenderness, and earnestness; the breadth of sympathy and thought; the delight in natural beauty and the exquisite description of it; the love of English country scenes; and, in particular, the intensely modern spirit. Arnold is sometimes turgid and sometimes dull: he does not always seize and hold. Sometimes his verse is only prose. But, all things considered, it is remarkable how acute a censor he was of his own achievements, and how little absolutely poor work he permitted to see the light. He printed, perhaps, less mediocre matter than any poet of his time;

and there are few of his pieces which the genuine lover of poetry would willingly let die.

It is, however, less as the artist than as the teacher, less as the mere writer than as the moralist, that Arnold is likely to make his mark upon his readers. What is most charming in his art must always appeal most powerfully to the most intelligent; but the general purport, the main tendency, of his poetry cannot well be missed by any attentive student. Those who come fresh to it will first be struck by the modern air that characterizes it—an air more pervasive in Arnold's verse than in that of any other nineteenth-century poet save Arthur Clough. Not even Tennyson, 'man of the time' as he has always been, has been so with quite the thoroughness we see in Arnold. Arnold was saturated with the *Zeit Geist*, and the fact is discernible in nearly all his verse. Even his Empedocles is as modern as he can be. Keenly alive was this poet to every peculiarity of the age in thought or act; he was

sensitive to all its characteristics. The growth of scepticism was but too patent to him: he lamented that, though the sea of faith was once at the full, he could now hear nothing but 'its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar.' We are here, he wrote, 'As on a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight.' He spoke of 'this iron time of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.' He lamented that

> 'Each day brings its petty dust
> Our soon-choked souls to fill,
> And we forget because we must
> And not because we will.'

He deplored the 'brazen prison' in which most men live, 'their lives to some unmeaning task-work given;' regretting equally the fate of those who, escaping from that prison, set sail 'for some port they know not where,' 'still standing for some false impossible shore.' He is never tired of bewailing the isolation of the individual, and of proclaiming a thirst for peace which 'a raving world will never let us satiate here.'

Nevertheless, all this notwithstanding, the prevailing tone of Arnold's verse is one of hope and comfort. He is no mere 'elegant Jeremiah,' as he was once described by one of 'the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph*.' Though he puts into fascinating verse the doubts and difficulties of modern thinkers, it is with none of the priggish self-assertion of the aggressive agnostic. He does not take delight in the questionings to which he gives such melodious expression. On the contrary, he seeks rather to cheer than to depress the spirits of his readers. He rebukes the eager, emancipated spirits who scoff at the followers of the old order of things: 'I say unto you, see that *your* souls live a deeper life than theirs!' He is no pessimist, but cries—

> 'Is it so small a thing
> To have enjoyed the sun,
> To have lived light in the spring,
> To have loved, to have thought, to have done?'

In one of his most despondent moods he is fain to conclude by declaring 'How fair a lot

to fill is left to each man still!' 'Fear not,' cries his Empedocles: 'Life still leaves human effort scope'—'Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair!'

'Haply, the River of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.'

'Nurse no extravagant hope,' says the poet; yet he evidently permitted himself to look forward to a time when the doubts, the irritations, which disturb mankind, shall be merged in a joyous serenity:—

'And though we wear out life, alas!
Distracted as a homeless wind,
In beating where we may not pass,
In seeking what we shall not find,
Yet we shall one day gain, life past,
Clear prospect o'er our being's whole,
Shall see ourselves, and learn at last
Our true affinities of soul.'

Nor does Arnold stop here, contenting himself with the simple assertion of a qualified optimism. He does something more

than prophesy; he points the way. To be sure, his teaching is moral rather than religious, pagan rather than specially Christian; but it is not anti-Christian—quite the reverse. And it is sufficiently definite. He dwells, first, upon the necessity of self-dependence. 'Resolve to be thyself,' he says in one place. 'The wise wight,' he observes elsewhere, 'in his own bosom delves, and asks what ails him so, and gets what cure he can.' Elsewhere he asserts that 'The aids to noble life are all within.' Of rather more practical value is his exhortation to mankind to 'set up a mark of everlasting light'—such as it has in the Founder of Christianity—'To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam;' then, he says, 'Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!' Another notion dear to Arnold was that of 'seeing life steadily and seeing it whole'—that is to say, of looking at existence fully, boldly, and without prejudice. Take, he said in effect, as broad views as you can. He was emphatic, too, about the need for regular occupa-

tion, for active philanthropy. He was no *laissez-faire* cynic. One of his sonnets is devoted to the praise of 'Quiet Work'—'Of labour, that in lasting fruit out-grows far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose.' In yet another sonnet, he declares that

> 'He who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,
> From strength to strength advancing—only he,
> His soul well knit, and all his battles won,
> Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.'

Assuredly no one will learn from Arnold to sit down idly in the face of trouble or anxiety. His morality was militant, not permissive, and its force should be manifest in the lives of all who imbibe it. Through all his verse there flows 'a stream of tendency which makes for righteousness.'

THE MERRY MAGISTRATE.

THE recent appointment of a well-known dramatist to the Commission of the Peace naturally attracted attention. Such things do not usually fall to the lot of literary men. Your man of letters is made, sometimes a consul at a foreign port, as Hannay was, or a Commissioner of Lunacy, as Procter was; sometimes he is made a County Court judge, as in the case of the author of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays,' who, if not exactly a humorist, is at least one of the manliest and least conventional of writers. But the Commission of the Peace is popularly regarded as a sign less of literary capacity and achievement than of social or professional position; it is granted to the man of consols and of acres, of local standing and of local interests. The

mere author must be well-to-do before he can dream of the distinction.

When Fielding was made Justice of the Peace for Westminster it was through the instrumentality of a patron. He had been labouring as a barrister, but the justiceship came to him by favour. There has always been something very piquant in the contrast between Fielding the magistrate, and Fielding the author of 'Tom Jones' and 'Pasquin.' It is extremely edifying to turn from the witty and humorous pages of the plays and fictions to the papers by Fielding on legal subjects which are still extant. Nobody would suppose that Fielding was either a wit or a humorist to judge from such a composition as his 'Charge delivered to the Grand Jury at the Sessions of the Peace held for the City and Liberty of Westminster, etc., on Thursday, the 29th of June, 1749.'

'There is no Part in all the excellent Frame of our Constitution which an Englishman can, I think, contemplate with such Delight and Admiration; nothing

which must fill him with so much Gratitude to our earliest Ancestors, as that Branch of British Liberty from which, Gentlemen, you derive your Authority of assembling here on this Day. The institution of Juries, Gentlemen, is a Privilege which distinguished the Liberty of Englishmen from those of all other Nations.'

Thus solemnly did the creator of 'Joseph Andrews,' the inventor of 'Tom Thumb,' address himself to the duties of his position. He was a merry magistrate, but less as the magistrate than as the writer. He took his vocation seriously, and left behind him not only this Charge but a couple of analyses of famous criminal cases, and also 'An Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, with some proposals for remedying this growing evil'—an impressive piece of work with which, it is to be feared, most of his modern readers are unacquainted.

Singularly enough, the literary magistrate, even when pre-eminently a wit and humorist, has not often devoted much of his attention to points of legal moment. Mr. W. S.

Gilbert—now J.P. of his county—has freely satirized the legal profession, from the Lord Chancellor downwards: his judge in 'Trial by Jury' was the first, and perhaps the greatest, of his comic successes. But, in general, the occupants of the bench, when at once literary, witty, and humorous, have rather neglected the law when choosing the subject-matter of their writings. Take the late Gilbert à Beckett for example. He was a barrister for nine years and a police magistrate for seven, and he wrote, as everybody knows, 'The Comic Blackstone'—a diverting work which has lately been brought skilfully 'up to date' by his son, Mr. Arthur à Beckett. But, apart from this elaborate bit of clever quizzing, à Beckett did not make the law the topic of much *persiflage*. One finds the most direct reference to it in a brief burlesque he wrote of Talfourd's tragedies, in the guise of a scene from a pretended comedy, called 'The Templars.' Here the Chief Bencher presides over the administration of the oath to those persons

who have been called to the bar, and afterwards addresses his audience as

> 'Benchers and barristers! men of high thought,
> To solemn work of justice given up.'

A Beckett wrote a dozen or more stage travesties, but, though one sees in them an occasional legal allusion, they were not at all largely coloured by the writer's legal experience.

Then there is the case of the late Lord Neaves. He was the ablest of the merry men who, sitting in authority in the Scotch courts, wielded their pens in leisure hours. And what was the result? Many delightful verses about Darwinism, and the Origin of Language, and Degrees for Women, and the like, but only a couple of songs on purely legal topics. One of these, 'The Sheriff's Life at Sea,' is slight, and of slight interest. More generally attractive are the lines on 'The Jolly Testator who makes his own Will'—who flatters himself that he will not apply to the lawyers, and ends by giving them no end of work to do. The genial

judge called upon the 'lawyers who liv
upon litigants' fees' to fill a bumper to th
ingenuous person, and especially to th
feminine variety of the species :

'Testators are good ; but a feeling more tender
Springs up when I think of the feminine gender.
The Testatrix for me, who, like Telemaque's moth
Unweaves at one time what she wove at another.
She bequeaths, she repeats, she recalls a donation,
And ends by revoking her own revocation ;
Still scribbling or scratching some new Codicil ;
O ! success to the Woman who makes her own Wi

Side by side with this may be place
perhaps, the parody, composed by M
Justice Hayes, of Gray's 'Elegy in
Country Churchyard'—lines supposed to
'Written in the Temple Gardens,' and full
legal flavour ; referring, among other thing
to those days of patient waiting in which

'The grave attorney knocking frequently,
The tottering clerk who hastens to the door.
The bulky brief and corresponding fee,
Are things unknown'

to the embryo and eager pleader.

But it is enough if the magistrate who is

humorist allows his humour to be seen of all men, whether it be exercised or not exercised upon his own profession. We were grateful years ago for the mingled wit and wisdom of the utterances of the American Judge Haliburton in the person of Sam Slick. Sam Slick's 'Nature and Human Nature' is not, perhaps, much read now, but at one time it was in great favour. Nowadays we get wit more refined and polished from another judge—this time an Indian official—the Sir Henry Cunningham whose novels (reminding one somewhat of the *genre* of Thomas Love Peacock) have latterly had so much vogue and popularity.

Of the English and Scotch judges of the past, the humorous outcome was mainly in the way of spoken witticism. They did not all write epigrams, as did Lord Chancellor Erskine, who, it will be remembered, was wont to scribble rhymes even when on the bench. Many will recollect the lines he addressed to Plumer, who was pleading before him in very monotonous and tedious fashion,

while the judge was anxious to be off to dinner with the Lord Mayor:

> 'Oh that thy cursed balderdash
> Were swiftly turned to callipash!
> Thy bands so stiff, and snug toupee,
> Corrected were to callipee!
> That, since I can nor dine nor sup,
> I might arise and eat thee up!'

Erskine wrote *jeux d'esprit* on more than one unhappy judge, just as in earlier times he had penned barbed couplets on attorneys and lost business by so doing.

GOETHE IN ENGLAND.

THERE are those who wonder how it comes about that any such association as the Goethe Society should be thought necessary at this time of day. Is there much more to be known or said about Goethe? There are, of course, few Englishmen who are thoroughly versed in all his writings; and an increase in the knowledge of those writings, and of the man who produced them, would undoubtedly be beneficial to us as a community. If, therefore, the Goethe Society does anything towards promoting that increase, it has a sufficient reason for existing. It is achieving a good work.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to reflect upon the processes by which the cultus of Goethe has become so well established among us as

it is. It is a cultus which dates back more than a century ago—from the year in which 'The Sorrows of Werther' appeared in an English translation. That was in 1779, five years after the original first saw the light. Goethe died in 1832, and before he passed away he had received full assurance of his vogue in these islands. His 'Geschwister' had been 'Englished'—also five years after its appearance; William Taylor had begun his Goethean labours with a version of 'Iphigenia in Tauris'; 'Stella' also had been translated. 'Goetz von Berlichingen' had been turned into English by no less famous a hand than that of Sir Walter Scott; Holcroft had done the same service for 'Hermann and Dorothea'; Shelley had contributed a paraphrase of the 'Walpurgisnacht' in 'Faust' to the *Liberal;* there had been two complete translations of 'Faust'—those of Lord F. L. Gower and of Anster; 'Torquato Tasso' had enjoyed the same distinction; and, last but not least, Carlyle had given to the world his version of 'Wilhelm Meister.'

Nor was this all. Not only had Goethe been put into an English dress: his aims and efforts had been ably and sympathetically expounded. It is not enough simply to cast the works of a foreign author upon the waters of public opinion. Attention must be directed to them: they must have their attractions pointed out; a few enthusiasts must force them into notice, if not into popularity. And this is just what was done for Goethe, whose English reputation during his lifetime was made for him, in the first place, by William Taylor, and afterwards, in a very much greater degree, by Carlyle, who was in every sense of the word 'his Prophet.' During the period I refer to Goethe had few, but influential, disciples, by whom his work was greeted with acclamations which could not but resound in the ears of the general public. His fame in England was destined to expand very greatly; but even by 1832 it had—thanks to the aforesaid devotees—assumed considerable proportions.

After the Master's death, his acceptance in

England spread with much rapidity. Between 1833 and 1871 there came half a dozen first-class translations of 'Faust,' beginning with Hayward's and ending with Bayard Taylor's. In the interval appeared versions of the Autobiography, the Letters, and the Conversations with Eckermann and others; while two creditable, though ineffectual, attempts, were made to reproduce the graces of the poems. Edgar Bowring, and afterwards Professor Aytoun and Sir Theodore Martin, did their best, but Goethe's lyrics are scarcely more susceptible of being adequately 'Englished' than are those of Heine. The critics, again, were diligently engaged. The fashion set by Carlyle, and so patiently and loyally maintained by him, was followed, on new lines, by De Quincey and Professor Masson; and then, by-and-by, the English reader was presented with that delightful piece of writing, the 'Life of Goethe,' by George Henry Lewes, which set the seal upon the popularity of the subject.

Since then, there have been the bio-

graphies by Hayward and by Mr. Sime; but, with all its imperfection, that of Lewes holds the field, by virtue of its literary skill. The later commentators on Goethe have been multitudinous. Herman Merivale, Justin M'Carthy, R. H. Hutton, Professor Blackie, Professor Seeley—these are only a very few among them; the former of the two professors having, perhaps, succeeded Carlyle not only as the translator, but as the prophet, of the Master. Alas! there have been discordant voices amid the din of praise bestowed upon the genius of Weimar. The robust intellect of Thackeray made immortal fun of the sentimentalism of 'Werther'; and there have even been persons of some literary standing who have spoken disrespectfully of 'Wilhelm Meister,' as being too often very dull, and by no means always in the best of taste. It was well, perhaps, that there should be a reaction from the unmeasured raptures of the devotees. It is proper to admire Goethe—the writer, if not the man—but it should be done 'this side idolatry.'

Goethe owes more, perhaps, to his poet-praisers than to any others, and more to Matthew Arnold than to all the rest. What struck Arnold most was Goethe's sense of detachment from the world, his air of serenity and independence:

> 'He pursued a lonely road,
> His eyes on Nature's plan; . . .
> Strong was he, with a spirit free
> From mists, and sane, and clear.'

It was his 'wide and luminous view' that attracted Arnold, and led him to rank the German sage with Wordsworth as the producer of song 'profound yet touching, sweet yet strong.' Notably enough, it was these same qualities that most impressed Emerson, who says that

> 'Goethe, raised o'er joy and strife,
> Drew the firm lines of Fate and Life,
> And brought Olympian wisdom down,
> To court and mart, to gown and town;'

adding that,

> 'Stooping, his finger wrote in clay
> The open secret of the day.'

This last couplet reminds one, in its turn, of

another passage in which Arnold deals with Goethe:

> 'He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*'

Mrs. Browning has a reference to Goethe's 'reaching eye,' and a minor poet has described him as 'a sea without one waft of wind.' Undoubtedly this calmness of his, the product of experience and self-knowledge, is immensely fascinating, and gives to his utterances a sort of Delphic solemnity.

QUEENS OF SONG.

NOT the feminine rulers of the lyric stage, but the female occupants of thrones who have deigned to spend a portion of their time in the service of the poetic muse. One such gracious lady was among us lately, welcoming the bards of Wales as brother singers. An accomplished verse-writer is 'Carmen Sylva,' Queen of Roumania; and well does she sustain her position among the Queens of Song, who, if not a numerous, are at least a very worshipful, company. One wonders, indeed, that there have not been more royal devotees of the lyre. Refined, educated, often learned even, and endowed with almost illimitable leisure, the world's queens, when of literary tastes and powers, ought to have produced much poetry — much more than is now

extant or known ever to have existed. In every case they had the stimulus of flattery, which ought to have spurred them on to do their best. On the other hand, they sometimes had to struggle with the distractions of amusement-loving courts.

Who was the royal lady who first distinguished herself in poetry? The first of whom European history takes count as making any elaborate contributions to the stock of verse was the Margaret, Queen of Navarre, to whom we owe the 'Heptameron,' that curious treasury of mediæval fiction. Margaret was precisely of the temperament which finds expression and satisfaction in the use of rhyme and rhythm. She was meditative, languorous, and, it is to be feared, considerably self-conscious. In her later years she would sit, it seems, with a girl attendant on each side of her, one of them to pen her letters as she composed them, the other to do the same for the scraps of song which she from time to time recited. That being so, it is not surprising to learn

that the majority of the poems thus pro
were, in the opinion of a feminine cr
to-day, 'inconsequent, empty as the v
an improvisatore.' At the same time
were among them 'charming rondeau
ballads'; spiritual songs, too, not less
ing—among them that 'Myrouer' whi
own Queen Elizabeth, hereafter to b
brated, translated into the English t
Margaret wrote, moreover, a series o
'mysteries'—religious operettas, as the
been called. In these there was a goo
of characteristic verse, of which a spe
has been reproduced in our language
poetess of our time. Yet another Qu
Navarre produced 'poésies'—the cons
Henry IV., also christened Margaret, b
so famous as her namesake.

Following the stream of feminine
effort, as illustrated in regal circles, we
the Continent of Europe behind us an
ourselves in the England of the fifteen
sixteenth centuries. Here there was
incitement to the cultus of the Muse

part of ladies highly placed. What says Nicholas Udall—author of our first comedy—as quoted by Horace Walpole?—

'It was now [he says] no news at all to see queens and ladies of most high estate and progenie, instede of courtly dalliaunce, to embrace vertuous exercises, readyng and writyng, and with moste erneste studies, both erlye and late, to apply themselves to the acquiryng of knowledge, as well as in all other liberal arts and disciplines.'

Out of soil so well cultivated there could not but come poetic fruit. Some of it, there is reason to believe, was grown in royal orchards. There was Anne Boleyn, for example, destined to be the bride of a king and the mother of a queen. The lady was 'liberally brought up,' and doubtless penned the two poems quoted by Sir John Hawkins in his 'History of Music.' Sir John thought that, if they were not written by her, they were at least written for her—a thing which has often happened, possibly, with royal compositions. Warton disagreed with Sir John, and Ritson ascribed one of the two lyrics to the Viscount Rocheford. However

this may be, we are on firm ground, apparently, when we come to the lyric performances of Anne Boleyn's successor, Queen Catherine (Parr). This thrice-married dame was 'not only learned, but a patroness of learning,' once coming to the aid of Cambridge University at an important juncture. She is best known in literature by her prose 'Lamentations of a Sinner bewailing the Ignorance of her Blind Life,' but she was so far influenced by the Muse that she put together a set of fifteen psalms, composed in imitation of David's, and, seemingly, there are one or two other psalms to place to her credit.

If, however, we are to believe all that was said of her by sycophantic contemporaries, the greatest of all the royal poetesses was Anne Boleyn's daughter. Now, all the world knows of at least three examples of Queen Elizabeth's readiness with rhyme. There are, for instance, those lines of hers on the Sacrament, beginning, 'Christ was the Word that spake it'; there is the line she

scribbled in reply to Sir Walter Raleigh's 'Fain would I climb but that I fear to fall'; and, lastly, there is her (if it *was* hers) amusing parody of the address presented to her by the men of Coventry. Less well-known than these is the couplet she is said to have composed on the name of a Mr. Noel:

'The word of *denial* and letter of *fifty*
Is that gentleman's name that will never be thrifty.'

We must go elsewhere, however, for proofs of good Queen Bess's title to the name of poetess. Her Majesty's 'translation of the speech of the chorus in the second act of the Hercules Œtœus of Seneca' is turgid stuff, albeit written in blank verse, of which the trick was caught (thinks Warton) from our first tragedy—that of 'Gorboduc.' Much better than this are the verses—'writ with charcoal on a shutter' while prisoner at Woodstock—which have been preserved by Hentzner:

'Oh, Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!
Whitnes this present prisonn, whither fate
Could beare me, and the joys I quit.

Thou causedest the guiltie to be losed
From bandes, wherein are innocents inclosed :
Causing the guiltless to be straite reserved,
And freeing those that death had well deserv.
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.'

Better, again, than these are the 'ver made by the Queine when she was suppos to be in love with Mountsyre'—verses cc tained in 'a very good and ancient MS. the Bodleian.' 'When I was fayre ar younge, and favour graced me'—so the begin, but they are too many to quote, anc reduced, they would hardly be intelligible They are, moreover, so much superior to the other 'poetry' ascribed to Elizabeth that one is inclined to think they may have been composed by an accomplished and complaisant 'ghost.'

Mary Queen of Scots was the rival of Elizabeth in poetry, as in other things. She is supposed to have written a whole volume of 'Poems on Various Occasions in the Italian, French, and Scottish Languages.' Among other verses ascribed to her is the

Latin rhythmical prayer beginning, 'O Domine Deus, speravi in te'; a Latin couplet written on a window pane at Buxton Wells; and the following distich, composed by her at Fotheringay Castle:

'From the top of my distrust,
Mishap has laid me in the dust.'

Everybody has heard of the 'Adieux,' attributed to Queen Mary, which were published in Paris more than a hundred years ago; but the only poem which may definitely be said to be from her pen is one on the death of her husband, Francis I., which has been handed down to us by Brantôme. This has a tender and agreeable melancholy:

'En mon triste et doux chant
D'un ton fort lamentable,
Je jette un deuil tranchant,
De perte incomparable,
Et en soupirs cuisans
Passe mes meilleurs ans.'

ELIZABETHAN ECHOES.

LOVERS of the *belles lettres* been glad to welcome the plete edition of the poetical w of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, prepared Mr. Edmund Gosse. Until that edition issued, Beddoes was practically unkn save to students of literature; and it is t hoped that the reproduction of his writ in an accessible form will do much to n him a favourite with thoughtful readers. his was altogether an interesting persona Not only was his literary achievement trinsically valuable, but it will always notable as forming, perhaps, the most e tive outcome of the Elizabethan rev which distinguished the first half of century.

Of course, the influence of Marlowe

Shakespeare, and of their contemporaries and immediate successors, is to be traced more or less in all the dramatic poetry which was written after them. All the poetical playwrights, from Dryden to Joanna Baillie, did their best, consciously or unconsciously, to write in the Elizabethan vein. But unfortunately, or fortunately, they did not succeed in the effort. They frequently conceived truly tragic characters and truly tragic situations, but they dealt with them, for the most part, in a stilted and turgid fashion. Few things are more dreary to read, few things would be more wearisome to witness on the boards, than the verse-plays of the latter part of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century. There is force in Dryden and Lee, pathos in Otway and Rowe, and smoothness of versification in Addison and Home; but human nature and the higher imagination are, in general, absent from them and from their compeers. Prolific in product as were the years between Dryden and Joanna Baillie, they were destitute, so far as dramatic poetry

was concerned, of the best qualities of th
Elizabethan era.

What those qualities were, it is hard
necessary to do more than briefly indicat
The age of Dryden, Southerne, Johnson, an
Maturin was a literary age, in which autho
wrote from choice or necessity, not from an
overmastering impulse within. They we
not carried away by any 'wave of thoug
and joy, lifting mankind amain,' such as th
of which Matthew Arnold speaks. Th
were inspired less by nature and experien
than by thought and study. They did n
'pipe but as the linnet sings;' they sang d
liberately, and after preparation. There w
nothing in their surroundings to force the
into song, or to give to their singing th
charm of freshness and of power. The
lived in a period of reaction—at a time
ebb in the stream of national feeling. Th
Elizabethans were more happily situate
They 'flourished' when the river of th
national life was at the flood—when,
the result of a great intellectual and spiritu

awakening, everything seemed beautiful and new—when, in the absence of a national drama, it was open to writers to create one, and to do so on the basis of life and nature. Is it any wonder that, living in a time of great mental activity, and coming untrammelled to their task, the Elizabethan writers should have exhibited so profound a grasp of human character, and so clear a conception of the characteristics of every-day existence?

Elemental force and beauty—a direct contact with life and nature—these are the chief features of Elizabethan literary products; and it was after these qualities that a group of writers in the early part of this century—a group in which Beddoes stands conspicuous—strove with remarkable enthusiasm and energy. For a hundred and fifty years, or thereabouts, the literary class had been content to labour within conventional lines and to produce conventional work—to bring forth children of the mind, which died almost immediately after birth; out of which, at any rate, the breath of life very soon passed away.

Happily, the study of the Elizabethans, as indulged in by the group to which I refer, had very different results. The pioneer in the new road was Charles Lamb, who, steeped to the lips in English seventeenth-century drama, set to work not only to imitate its form and style, but to write as far as he could in the same spirit. His 'John Woodvill,' it is to be feared, is little read, and would receive, I suspect, scant courtesy at the hands of present-day audiences, if presented to them. But the fact remains that it is of much literary interest and value, as being the first attempt made by a dramatic writer (since the Commonwealth) to get back to Nature, and to deal with it in a natural, and yet elevated, manner.

The question is not one of theatrical effectiveness, for, according to the standards of to-day, there is (outside of Shakespeare) very little in the Elizabethan drama which can properly be represented before modern audiences. The question is rather one of Elizabethan literary methods—of Elizabethan

freshness of observation and largeness of style, of Elizabethan directness and simplicity (for all its opulence of phrase). Not much is thought nowadays of 'The Honeymoon,' brought out by Tobin just three years after 'John Woodvill,' and still in the repertory of the stage. Nevertheless, it is notable as a literary landmark. It was the precursor of the plays of Sheridan Knowles, of Talfourd, of Sir Henry Taylor, and of Westland Marston; just as 'John Woodvill' was the immediate forerunner of Procter's 'Dramatic Scenes,' of Beddoes' 'Bride's Tragedy,' of R. H. Horne's 'Death of Marlowe,' and of the dramas of George Darley. One may note here two 'streams of tendency'—on the one hand towards simplicity and naturalness; and on the other, towards the vigorous and the imaginative. The latter are the higher qualities, and must always be held in the greater honour; but in both instances the desire to echo the Elizabethans is obvious, and, to a limited extent, praiseworthy. Lightly as we may regard the poetic features

of 'The Honeymoon,' 'Virginius,' or 'Ion,' the aim of the writers must be respected. They desired to get away from the staginess of the eighteenth-century school, and to emulate the ease and freedom of the sixteenth. It was not their fault that they could not pretend to the finer and deeper powers of men like Horne and Beddoes; especially of Beddoes, who, at his best, runs all but the greatest of the Elizabethans very close, both in fancifulness and in intensity.

There are passages in Beddoes' works which might have received the hall-mark of John Fletcher; yet, on the whole, it would have been better if he had been less powerfully influenced by the Elizabethans, and had had a stronger individuality of his own. This, after all, is of the essence of literary permanence. In literature, 'echoes,' if not exactly 'nothing worth,' must needs have less value than original utterances. And this may account for the comparative oblivion into which Beddoes' writings have fallen. Authors may have intellectual kinship with

their predecessors, and work practically in the same vein; but, in general, it is better that each period should have its own literary methods than that it should adopt those of the past.

THE LADY NOVELIST.

WHEN Ko-Ko, in 'The Mikado,' made a little list of social offenders who might well be underground, and who 'never would be missed,' he rashly included 'that singular anomaly, the lady novelist.' And I say 'rashly' because, as a matter of fact, if all the lady novelists of to-day were suddenly to disappear, their absence would certainly be remarked—if only because there had been so many of them. They would cause a vacuum indeed. Not miss them? Why, look at the number of them. Take up Mr. Mudie's catalogue, and note how many of the novels of the time are the product of feminine authors. The trade is carried on mainly by the ladies. The male romancist is hopelessly outnumbered; so far as the

nere counting of heads goes, he is nowhere.

Now, why is this? Why all this cerebral excitement in the parlour and boudoir? Why should the lady novelist have come so largely and numerously to the front, putting her male rivals to the blush? Partly, of course, because there are more women than men, and more women than men who are compelled to seek some home occupation. The redundant sex must find something to do; and when it has exhausted teaching, needlework, and the like, it bethinks it of the penning of a story. It is incited thereto partly by the fact that there is now a greater demand than ever, among its own members, for literary products of the imagination. If so many women write, it is to a large extent because so many women want to read. The latter create the demand which the former supply. The majority of novel-readers at this moment are women of all ages: what more natural than that women should make haste to invent for their sisters?

Something is due, of course, to the general emancipation of women from the old shackles that bound them. If no Englishwoman dreamed of writing a novel until Aphra Behn began to plan out 'Oroonoko,' we may be sure it was not because there was not the ability to put a story together, but because the feeling of society hitherto has been opposed to any such exercise of feminine gifts. And if Aphra Behn and the writer who followed in her footsteps, Mrs De la Rivière Manley, were inclined to a certain amount of coarseness in their stories, may we not put down that, also, to their sense of the fact that in becoming authoresses they were outraging general opinion and bringing obloquy upon themselves? The female writer of their time was a free-lance led by circumstances as well as temperament to the committal of literary sins in which there was probably as much of bravado as of actual viciousness. Mistresses Behn and Manley are not, morally, very creditable ancestresses of the lady novelist of our

day, but it would be easy to overrate their improprieties. Daring as these women were, they were unquestionably able; and Mrs. Behn's 'Oroonoko,' to name no other book of hers, had high literary qualities, which make it not unworthy of the position it holds among the earliest achievements of its kind.

Mrs. Manley died in 1724, and not till 1761 did another lady novelist successfully assert her capacity. This was Mrs. Frances Sheridan, mother of the great comedy-writer. In this lady's 'Sidney Biddulph' and 'Nourjahad'—the former of which enjoyed the praise both of Johnson and of Fox—we have, perhaps, the first legitimate fruits of the Englishwoman's work in fiction. If we accept that proposition, then the lady story-tellers began well indeed. From this point onwards they diverged into a multiplicity of directions. Mrs. Sheridan was followed by Clara Reeve, whose fancy, influenced by 'The Castle of Otranto,' took a mediæval tinge, and produced in due course 'The Old English Baron.' Of her, it may be

not nearly so truly, by observers like
ore and Lady Blessington, and in a
s successful degree by Lady Dacre
dy Charlotte Bury. Then, again, in
ool of simplicity and pathos, and of
ic manners generally, founded by
heridan, one of the earliest pupils was
nchbald, whose 'Simple Story' and
e and Art' have, of late, happily
put within the reach of the present-
eader. Next came Charlotte Smith
Mrs. Opie, each in the same style,
eded in their turn by writers like Miss
ury, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, and
Craik, in the last of whom we had, and
. the flower and crown of the homely
the wholesome. Contemporary with
Radcliffe were the Misses Porter, who,
ng women, were the pioneers of historical
on, of which 'The Scottish Chiefs' still
ains for boys and youths a very charming
mple. In the purely moral paths of in-
ted story Mrs. Brunton may be said to
ve led the way, while in what may be

termed the romantic field we have the two extremes of Miss Pardoe and Mrs. Henry Wood, whose romance, however, was so apt to degenerate into 'sensation.' The religious tale was cultivated successfully by Miss Wetherell, of 'Wide, Wide World' celebrity, who has left behind her very competent followers.

Some feminine fictionists of the past have made themselves conspicuous by the national flavour given by them to their creations. What, for example, could be more thoroughly English, not only in locality and in characterization, but in general tone, than the works of Jane Austen, Mary Mitford, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Mary Anne Cross ('commonly called' George Eliot)? Are they not redolent of the land betwixt the Channel and the Cheviots? Is not Mrs. Gaskell as intimately associated with Lancashire as Mrs. Cross with Warwickshire? In like manner, Miss Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, and Mrs. S. C. Hall achieved for Irish scenes and character even more than was done by Elizabeth

Hamilton, Mrs. Johnstone, and Susan Ferrier for Scottish places and people. Mrs. Trollope will be best remembered by her American delineations, her talent being for the successful quizzing of habits unfamiliar and unpleasant to her.

Nowadays, the intellectual field covered by the lady novelist is more widely spread than it ever was. There is no spot, however remote or guarded, into which she does not adventure. She has gained courage from her vogue, and asserts her right to go anywhere and say everything. With equal confidence she deals with lawless passion and with mysteries of faith, with foreign men and ways, and with the baldest incidents of English homes.

CURIOSITIES OF VERSE.

BY way of celebrating the virtues of a late Chief Rabbi, a Jewish cleric composed a Hebrew *hesped*, consisting of a thousand words, each of them beginning with the same letter—*Aleph*. And by mastery of the language, especially by frequent use of the first person future of the verb, which begins with *Aleph*, he was able not merely to string together the necessary number of consecutive words, but to impart to them an intelligible meaning.

No doubt the task was arduous, but this is the sort of labour which, delighted in, physics pain, giving pleasure in proportion to the difficulties vanquished. Such self-imposed troubles have always had a great fascination for the ingenious. The aforesaid *hesped* is practically a gigantic exercise in alliteration.

and for how very many in the past has alliteration had its charms! It is still freely used for the purposes of epigram, in prose as well as verse. In the latter form it has figured in all sorts of guises. It has been used occasionally to give point to certain passages, or constantly, as in old English verse, which was, indeed, mainly based upon it. Then, adopted as a 'fad,' it has been made the characteristic of an entire composition, different letters governing different lines, or the same letter dominating every word in the poem. This last, of course, is not an easy thing to achieve, but it has been achieved, nevertheless; as in the *jeu d'esprit* ('sung by Major Marmaduke Muttonhead to Madeline Mendoza') of which the following is a stanza:

> 'My Madeline's most mirthful mood
> Much mollifies my mind's machine,
> My mournfulness's magnitude
> Melts—make me merry, Madeline!'

Great, indeed, have been the feats performed with that small and simple weapon,

the letter. With poems on the alphabet everybody is acquainted.

> 'A is an Angel of blushing sixteen,
> B is the Ball where the Angel was seen'—

of such things the name is legion. By the everlasting acrostic most people have been worried. Fairly familiar, too, are the stanzas which embody letters used for the sounds that they convey, or, to put it differently, the stanzas in which words are compounded out of the sounds attached to letters:

> 'Our hearts had struck a common chord
> And tears were in each E,
> As, uttering a parting word,
> The cabman murmured "G."'

These, however, are among the commonplaces of ingenuity, in the number of which must be included the habit, long ago exploded, of giving printed prominence in a verse to certain letters which, taken together, formed a date—chronograms, as they were called. Rather less trite is the lipogram, a poem from which a certain letter is religiously excluded; side by side with

which may be placed the composition in which one vowel only is used throughout—a still greater strain upon the patience. To arrange, as so many have done, that every line they wrote in a poem should end with the same letter, usually a vowel, is not to give the writer much anxiety; but, on the other hand, to place certain letters at regular intervals throughout a piece of verse, so as to yield a recognisable name or sentence—that is to impose upon the craftsman conditions by no means easy to fulfil. Edgar Poe, it will be remembered, essayed this task, and performed it successfully.

From the letter we rise to the syllable. Poets have often put together lines composed wholly of monosyllables, and the effect has frequently been great. But the mere artificers have not been contented with this occasional little trick; they have concocted entire lyrics out of words of one syllable, not because the result was effective, but because the labour was tiresome. At other times they have taken a certain word, and

devoted a few lines to ringing all the possible changes upon it—to making a jingle, clever, no doubt, but decidedly distressing. If letters could be introduced deliberately, at definite points in a poem, words obviously could be treated likewise; and so we have had from certain writers a few rhythmic efforts in which, following certain words in an ascertained direction—say, diagonally—one found them resolving themselves into a consecutive and comprehensible statement; though why all this care should be taken to bury the meaning of the poet is not clear to the unenthusiastic reader. Why go to so much trouble for so little satisfaction?

More general pleasure is to be got out of the verse-makers' eccentricities in rhyming. In this there is scope for the exhibition of humour as well as of ingenuity and patience. Much fun has been got out of *bouts rimés*—verses written up to certain definite rhymes; and the diversion is not likely to die out readily. More difficult, however, is long-sustained rhyming to a particular word or to a par-

ticular sound. Calverley has a piece in which he supplies no fewer than forty-two rhymes to 'agrees'—a *tour de force* indeed. Then, some ludicrous effects can be obtained by rhyming to the eye as well as to the ear; as in this example:

'There was an old witch of Malacca,
Who smoked such atrocious tabacca,
When tigers came near
They trembled with fear
And didn't attempt to attacca.'

Still commoner in comic verse is the recurrence of short rhyming lines, consisting sometimes of one word only. Thus Mr. Burnand represents his fisherman in 'Happy Thoughts' as

'Sniggling,
Wriggling
Eels, and higgling
Over the price
Of a nice
Slice
Of fish, twice
As much as it ought to be.'

In like manner, Mr. Cholmondely-Pennell pictures the young ladies coming down at Dunoon—

'Glidingly,
Slidingly,
Slippingly,
Skippingly,
Trippingly,
Clippingly,
Bumpingly,
Thumpingly,
Stumpingly,
Clumpingly'—

and so on.

From letters, syllables, and words, we come to lines, which have often been manipulated in surprising fashion. They have been made, for instance, to read just the same whether read forwards or backwards; they have been so punctuated as to convey, according to circumstances, wholly contrary meanings; they have also been so placed in relation to each other as to create similar confusion. Further, they have been selected arbitrarily from the *corpus poetarum* and put in such conjunction, the one with the other, as to furnish a most mystifying mosaic:

'Pity the sorrows of a poor old man,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran,
And from his lip these words of insult fell,
"It must be so. Plato, thou reasonest well."'

Again:

> I would commend their bodies to the rack,
> At least we'll die with harness on our back.
> Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
> Virtue alone is happiness below.'

Finally, lines of verse have, on occasion, been split up and handled in such a way as to form, when printed, a reasonable likeness to such objects as a violin, a decanter, a bottle, a wine-glass, a cross, an altar, lozenges, and wings! They have even been squeezed into the shape of a circle and inserted in watch-cases. On curiosities of diction I will not dwell, for those belong rather to the matter of verse than to its form, in which the largest measure of eccentricity is possible.

STAGE STUMBLES.

IT is recorded of a recent representative of Miss Sterling in 'The Clandestine Marriage' that, in the scene where she seeks to force an entrance into her sister Fanny's room, she spoke of the maid as having 'locked the key and put the door in her pocket.' The *lapsus linguæ* was, of course, received with laughter, but slips of the kind are by no means so rare as might be imagined. It so happens that a very similar story is told of an actress—Mrs. Davenport — who was representing another character (Mrs. Heidelberg) in the same play, and who made that person say that 'she had the keys of her pocket in the cupboard.' No doubt, 'bulls' of this sort are frequently uttered intentionally by way of 'gag,' but even then they have generally had

their origin in accident. A performer blunders one night into an absurdity, and, finding it 'takes,' repeats it; in nine cases out of ten the humour was, in the first place, unconscious—the outcome of some unexpected *contretemps*.

Nor is it at all surprising that actors and actresses should on occasion stumble in their words. Their memory may suddenly fail; they may be attacked by nervousness; they may be disconcerted by something; they may experience a momentary confusion of ideas; in the lower ranges of the profession they may err from ignorance; or over-familiarity with their parts may betray them into a mechanical displacement of their phrases. It was probably owing to the last-named cause that Quin, as Justice Balance, once addressed to Peg Woffington, as Sylvia (in 'The Recruiting Officer'), the following question—'What age were you when your dear mother married?'—a mistake which was only intensified when he added—'I ask, what age were you when your mother was

born?' Happily Mrs. Woffington was equal to the occasion, and replied, 'I cannot answer your question, but I can tell you how old I was when my mother died.' At other times, a performer will altogether forget the exact wording of his or her part, but, remembering its purport, will seek to paraphrase it; as in the case of the 'lady' who, having to say, 'I have heard of such a wretch at a neighbouring Court; she left her husband and fled with a villain,' supplied the following variant: 'I 'ave 'eard of sitch a wretch at a neighbouring 'ouse; she left her 'usband and ran away with a blackguard.'

In this instance, evidently, there was an element of ignorance in the matter; and to ignorance also one may safely ascribe the achievement of the 'utility' man who, having to announce (in 'The Wife') that 'St. Pierre waits below,' blandly intimated the arrival of the 'street pier.' It is possible, indeed, to err from excess of care and literalness, as in the case of the supernumerary who 'went on' for Lord Burleigh in 'The Critic.' The stage

direction says: 'Enter Lord Burleigh, bows to Dangle, shakes his head, and exit.' Unfortunately, this man of genius, after entering and bowing, shook, not his own head, but Dangle's. The chronicler who records these two last catastrophes also tells the story of a Numitorius in 'Virginius' who could not be got to remember his own name. He was besought to try the effect of the association of ideas, and to think of Numitorius in connection with the 'Book of Numbers.' But this Biblical excursion was too much for him, with the result that, when the night of the performance came, he boldly announced himself to Appius Claudius as 'Deuteronomy'!

Unquestionably, however, the greater number of stage stumbles proceed from sheer nervousness or 'fright.' Even the most experienced actors are subject to this distressing malady—distressing both to performer and to looker-on; and, that being so, it is not wonderful that beginners should break down occasionally. The old tale about 'let the par-

son cough,' and that other old tale about 'a serpent's thanks' and a 'toothless child' (both of them, by the way, enshrined in the pages of Moore's Diary), have been capped over and over again. The name of such anecdotes is legion. That of the Anglo-Italian clown who, having to say at a critical moment 'Pluck them asunder,' came out with 'Mass under em plocket!' is, I am disposed to think, apocryphal. It is difficult to believe that any clown, however much of an Italian or however much excited, could arrive at a monstrosity like that. More likely is the account given, by the same authority, of a certain Marcellus's achievement in the scene where Hamlet, questioning Horatio about the Ghost, asks, 'Did it stay long?' and Horatio replies, 'While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.' Marcellus ought to observe, 'Longer, longer,' but on this occasion he was silent. 'Longer, longer,' whispered the prompter. 'Well,' said Marcellus genially, having realized that he ought to interpose something, 'Say two hundred!'

A retired actor relates how, on one occasion, during a representation of 'Richard III.,' a 'super,' who had to say to Richmond, 'Your words are fire, my lord, and warm our men,' reduced this to sad prose by substituting, 'If we'd a fire, my lord, we'd warm our men.' There is more than one French anecdote to a like effect—such as that of the novice who, having to cry, 'Sonnez trompettes,' ejaculated 'Trompez sonnettes;' and that of the other greenhorn who, instead of saying 'C'en est fait, il est mort,' said 'C'en est mort, il est fait.' It is said that an actress once spoiled a whole scene by picturing herself 'Avec Rome dans mon lit et Claude à mes genoux;' and it is certain that a wretched *figurant* utterly ruined a tragedy by shouting at an all-important situation, 'Le meurt se roi.' Such tricks do the tongue play the most eager of us when, for some reason or other, the brain fails to fulfil its functions and the 'little member' is left to wag as seemeth best to it.

A good deal of the embarrassment which

has from time to time befallen performers on the stage has been due to interruptions and interpolations by spectators. There is usually in every audience some quick-witted fellow, ready at any moment to take advantage of opportunities for chaff which author or actor may afford him. Unhappy the dramatist or the artist who writes or utters a sentence which can be turned into a weapon against him. Sometimes it is the playwright who suffers, as in the play called 'Sancho Panza,' where the Duke has to say, 'I'm beginning to get tired of Sancho.' 'So are we,' cried the pit. Then there was the *danseuse* in the French play, who, appearing on the stage just as the interest was flagging, said in reply to an inquiry, 'Je viens tirer un auteur d'embarras.' 'Ma foi, il était temps,' was the prompt comment from the stalls. Everybody remembers how Ireland's 'Vortigern' was snuffed out by the yell of derision which followed the utterance of the line, 'And when this solemn mockery is o'er.' Performers, unfortunately for them, are always liable to rude remarks

from the pit or gallery. Sometimes the inclination to 'guy' is irresistible. 'Am I then a man to be beloved?' asked an amateur Richard III. at Dublin. 'Indeed, then, you're not!' averred the pit immediately. So, again, when the lady in the French tragedy said to the very ugly Mithridates, 'Vous changez de visage,' an unfeeling pittite at once cried, 'Laissez le faire!' And so, once more, when an actor from Lille, who had not pleased his Parisian audience, came to the line, 'Mais pour ma fuite, ami, quel parti dois-je prendre?' a voice was heard to say, 'L'ami, prenez la poste et retournez en Flandre!'

Sometimes an interruption from the auditorium is dictated by the most friendly spirit, but it is not generally the less awkward on that account. Fanny Kemble tells us how, one night when she was playing Lady Townley, she allowed a pause to take place, as usual, at the point where her husband leaves the room in anger—a pause, of course, for effect. But at least one man in the audience

chose to fancy that she was lacking in proper courage, and exclaimed, 'Now then, Fanny' to the intense amusement of everybody, herself included. This may remind many of the rebuke given by one galleryite to another celestial, who, tired of a certain Jaffier's prolonged death-struggles, exhorted him to 'Die at once.' 'Be quiet, you blackguard,' cried the courteous 'god'; then, turning to the lingering actor, 'Take your time, sir!'

THE END.

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.

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